SYDNEY St. AUBYN.

VOL. I.

S

SYDNEY ST. AUBYN.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

BY MR. ROBINSON,

AUTHOR OF LOVE FRAGMENTS, &c.

VOL. I.

" For Love has ſworn—(I heard the awful vow!)
" The wav'ring heart ſhall never be his care—
" That ſtoops at any baſer ſhrine to bow,
" For what he cannot rule, he ſcorns to ſhare.

MRS. BARBAULD.

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ADVERTISEMENT:

UNLIKE the preſent ſyſtem of novel writers, which teems with ſo much of the marvellous, the author of this work, ſimply copying from nature, leaves the fantaſtic fabricators of modern tales, to range at pleaſure in the regions of fiction and romance; and contents himſelf with endeavouring to intereſt the public in an humble domeſtic tale, which, without being intended to ſhew mankind as they *ought to be*, has a more faithful tendency to repreſent them as *they are*.

London, March 1794.

DEDICATION.

IN the author's ſearch after patronage,
In his endeavours to ſecure it,
He fixed upon many illuſtrious characters
To whom he might look up
With the common confidence of ſucceſs.—
——He paused:——
The language of adulation,
The meanneſs of ſervility diſguſted him,
And he abandoned the idea,
Determined to ſend his work
UNPATRONIZED
into the world:
Until it occurred to him,
That, to the daughter of his earlieſt friend,
(His faithful patron and protector,)
Gratitude might offer its ready tribute of reſpect,
In honourable acknowledgment of her father's friendſhip.

To

To her therefore,

To Miſs —— —— ——

(over whoſe tender years

The early virtues ſhed their opening luſtre,)

Be the following pages inſcribed.

And if the MORAL,

Which the author has endeavoured to inculcate,

Should happily guard her youthful mind

Againſt levities and errors, ſo fatal in their conſequences;

If the dangerous caprices of AUGUSTA,

Oppoſed to the generous firmneſs of LOUISA,

Should furniſh a contraſt ſufficiently ſtriking,

To induce her to imitate the one,

And avoid the other's indiſcretions,

It will be ſufficiently gratifying

To the vanity of the AUTHOR, and to the feelings of the MAN.

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SYDNEY ST. AUBYN.

LETTER I.

To STAFFORD SULLIVAN, ESQ.

Adelphi-Terras, London.

Matlock, Tueſday.

YOU tell me, Stafford, that the "dear perfidious" is at laſt likely to be happy, and do you ſuppoſe the intelligence is unwelcome to me? No, my friend, from my ſoul I wiſh her every poſſible felicity—true, ſhe has given a

fatal ſtab to *my* tranquility, but I forgive it, and will endeavour to forget her.

The ſeaſon of deluſion is paſt, and the reign of reaſon reſtored—I turn back, aſhamed to have ſacrificed my youth to ſuch fallacious purſuits, and to have veſted ſo important a matter as my happineſs on the fidelity of a *woman* who was unworthy of eſteem—without doing myſelf the juſtice to conſider the caprices of the ſex. Blinded by my paſſion, I hurried on with heedleſs temerity, until the power of recovering myſelf was loſt—

— Or if I ſaw at all, it was with the partial eye of generous affection, that eagerly magnified every *trait* of merit in my miſtreſs; whilſt ſhe, cunningly conſcious of the weakneſs of love, with ſubtle diſſimulation, moulded me to her will;

will; and when a ſeries of lengthened unkindneſs, or rather cruelty, had looſened the attachment, I was ſimple enough to be lured by a ſyren-ſmile, and ſuffer the momentary gratification which reſulted from it, to counterbalance an age of lingering anxiety.

Thus ſelf-betrayed into the ſnare, I hugged my chains, and thought even captivity ſweet.

And what remains for me, diſappointed and forlorn? think you that I ſhall declare eternal warfare againſt the ſex, and ſeek to retaliate?—No, my friend, around the hallowed altars of love, there are many pure and honourable votaries, and I will yet try to ſelect one, whoſe heart, untainted like Auguſta's, may ſoften with delicious ſenſibility.

 Adieu,

Adieu, then, to the inglorious cauſe of coquetry and conqueſt: Adieu, falſe Auguſta!—Stafford, a ſigh has this inſtant eſcaped me—I own it is a weakneſs, but what would oppoſition avail me? theſe are little lapſes of the heart, which time only can remedy; and, till the cure is complete, I muſt ſubmit to the diſcipline neceſſary to effect it.

Adieu,

SYDNEY ST. AUBYN.

LET-

LETTER II.

To the Same.

Matlock, Sunday.

I HAVE heard from the cottage widow—good, faithful creature! She thinks not, whilſt her humble gratitude enumerates the virtues of the lovely inconſtant, and offers the purer incenſe of honeſt praiſe, that ſhe is applying new tortures to the boſom ſhe wiſhes to conſole.

How ſtrange and inconſiſtent is the character of Auguſta Conway? with a heart tremblingly alive to every generous impreſſion, with a hand "open as day

to melting charity," ſhe bends to the flimſy dominion of Pride, and ſuffers it's frail ſiſter, Vanity, to obſcure every amiable quality. Never has the ſuffering widow or unprotected orphan looked up to her in vain; no cautious cold diſcrimination checks the courſe of her beneficence; uniformly indefatigable in her favourite purſuits, ſhe is conſtantly ſecking out the deſtitute dwellings of diſtreſs, and having once diſcovered them, misfortune and miſery diſappear, and Auguſta's ſelf-approving taſk is accompliſhed.

Nor am I leſs aſtoniſhed to hear of the unwearied ſolicitude and tender attention with which ſhe cheriſhes the beautiful orphan I recommended to her protection; not a day paſſes but it is the object of her enquiry and care, and whilſt

I pauſe

I pauſe over the unlettered pages of my humble correſpondent, fancy furniſhes a ſcene inexpreſſibly delicious. I ſee my lovely tyrant, thoughtleſs of the miſeries I am doomed to ſtruggle with, ſilently hang over the helpleſs little one, whilſt a tear, diſtilling from her charming eyes, beſpeaks the ſecret triumph of ſenſibility. I ſee her gentle boſom ſwell with a ſympathetic ſigh, whilſt ſhe liſtens to the plaints of perſecuted innocence, forgetful of one whoſe youth ſhe has fatally embittered, and cruelly conſigned to diſtant exile, only for the crime of having loved her.

Then, Stafford, you fear I am ſtill in danger, and that theſe are ſymptoms of a relapſe—I am not accuſtomed to diſſemble with my friend—I *will* own I thought I had greater command of *my-*

ſelf,

ſelf, and that I could, at leaſt, have heard of the faithleſs maid with indifference—but I tremble at the power of her faſcinating charms, ſtill, ſtill freſh in melancholy remembrance—this rebel heart of mine is not to be depended on; hope invidiouſly tries to flutter about it, and with miſchievous ſeductions, lure it from it's fealty; but I can ſometimes baffle the ſubtle intruder by threatening that a few days longer, and his power will be loſt.—Yet, after all, Stafford, I feel the victory imperfect.

I believe you know *Douglas*, but I never told you how nearly he was intereſted in the ſtory of my little favourite. I bluſh, Stafford, to have owned a man for my friend, whoſe baſe ungenerous conduct towards the defenceleſs mother of this lovely orphan, ſtamped him the

moſt

moſt conſummate of villains. Deſerted and deſtitute, the wretched victim to his perfidy found a ſhelter in Mrs. Clements's cottage, where, at the moment of her diſſolution, ſhe conſigned her infant to my care. I promiſed to protect it. The expiring ſufferer relied upon me; and never ſhall I forget the anxious look of maternal fondneſs with which ſhe beheld me preſs it to my boſom, and ſwear never to deſert it—" Heaven," ſaid ſhe in feeble accents, " will reward *you*, Mr. St. Aubyn, whilſt it hurls vengeance on the unnatural father."—This was all, ſhe made one final effort to ſnatch a kiſs from the unconſcious babe, but it was too late, ſhe fell back, ſighed, and expired.

It is upwards of two years ſince I witneſſed this affecting ſcene, and ſo forcible

cible was the impreſſion, that I have it ſtill perfect in remembrance—what became of Douglas I know not—I contrived to get him made acquainted with the circumſtances of poor Maria's death, but had never the ſatisfaction of hearing from him—indeed it was ſuggeſted by an aſſociate of his, that he had been mean enough to accuſe me of having acted from a *ſelfiſh* principle, on the occaſion. I was not hurt at the wretch's ſuſpicions, becauſe they diſcovered his nature, and proved how eagerly a depraved mind can fly to any ſubterfuge that ſeems likely to palliate it's own enormities.

I have written inſtructions to the widow how to act, and from her I ſhall occaſionally hear of Auguſta.—Mrs. Clements is ſilent about the wedding—perhaps,

haps, Stafford, it is not ſo near as you think—Yet what is her wedding to me?

SYDNEY ST. AUBYN.

LET-

LETTER III.

To Miss Louisa Wentworth,

Upper Harley-Street.

The Moat-House, Devon.

HERE we are, my dear, in a glorious buſtle, making preparations for this wedding of mine, and thurſday fortnight is ſingled out to witneſs the ſurrender of Auguſta's liberty---heigh-ho, Louiſa! I am almoſt afraid of this buſineſs; when once theſe wretches get into power, away flies the maſk which made the lover artificially agreeable, and up ſtarts the gloomy countenance which makes

makes the huſband naturally hideous. Mercy on me, how will the envious *little* minds of my own ſex, and the tormented tribe of the other, exult in Auguſta's defeat? What a mortifying thought, Louiſa! I proteſt, but that I have gone too far to retract, I would inſiſt on your contriving ſome unforeſeen diſaſter to intercept this frightful ceremony.

I have certainly teized this creature of mine long and ſeverely enough to try his patience and ſubmiſſion; but his love, he ſwears, is interwoven with his exiſtence, and only rages more fiercely for being oppoſed. Well then, honeſt man, for heaven's ſake, reſolve to let one keep pace with the other, and I am content.

My grave aunt purſes up her mouth with provoking formality, and declares

I ſhall never have the qualifications requiſite for a wife; I have no ſteadineſs, no ſolidity—nay, ſhe went ſo far the other day as to ſay I was not ſober enough for ſuch a ſtation—" Bleſs me," Madam, " what proof of intoxication have you ever ſeen in Auguſta to warrant ſuch a charge? I own the praiſes and flattery of the male creatures would have had ſome ſuch effect on a *weak* mind, but with *me* the impreſſion was only momentary, and the effect, of courſe, could not be otherwiſe——" Then we have ſome dry deſultory comments on conjugal duties, which I ſee no other way of putting an end to, than by flouncing away to the harpſichord, and drowning my dear aunt's ſhrill cadences in a full chorus of all the chords within my reach.

Per-

Perchance my ſighing ſwain is preſent—but not a ſyllable, for his life, dares *he* utter; that he condeſcends to be always on my ſide, is not to be wondered at: if a judge puts the queſtion "Guilty, or not guilty," to a criminal, what anſwer is he moſt likely to receive?

I think I had this inſtant a glimpſe of my hero, indulging himſelf in a ſolitary ſaunter about the garden—aye, there he is! with a pair of greedy large eyes directed towards my window—but excuſe me, Sir, I have not a glance to ſpare: poor man, he'll have enough of them by and by, with ſome peculiar accompaniments that may not be altogether ſo deſirable; I have a ſhrill voice, you know, Louiſa, together with a ſharp ſet of features, which phyſiognomiſts agree are infallible ſymptoms of *ſhrewiſm*. Well,

the man has eyes, and I ſuppoſe, underſtanding; let him look to theſe things in time!

The ſubject of my approaching nuptials already occupies every one's attention, and an incident lately occurred that a good deal diſtreſt me. I have told you, my dear, that in the neighbouring hamlet, I have a few aged annuitants to whom my little mite is occaſionally welcome. In paſſing the hall here, a day or two ſince, I obſerved a number of them ranged on each ſide the door.—" Ah, my dear young lady," ſaid one, (delegated I ſuppoſe for the purpoſe) " we hear you are going to leave us, and willing to take the moſt likely opportunity of ſeeing you, we are come dutifully and gratefully to offer you our bleſſings and thanks for your long goodneſs

neſs to us, and our families; and we hope you will believe we forget our own loſs in conſidering that we muſt part with our honoured benefactreſs, ſhe who has ſo often ſmiled on our humble dwellings, moſt likely never to ſee her again."

This little private inſtitution of mine has been about three years eſtabliſhed; it is limited to twenty aged and infirm widows; and I declare, Louiſa, I never felt the true value of that ſurplus which affluence afforded me, till I found it the means of perfecting this project of benevolence.

I called them all around me—they had taken ſome little pains to appear cleanly and neat—" Be not afraid, my humble friends, that I ſhall forſake you, or that any change in my ſituation can ever make me forget the obligations I

have entered into with you, they are ſealed by the ſacred bond of humanity, and I promiſe you, on my honor, it ſhall never be cancelled."—They fell on their knees, and I was obliged to hurry from a ſcene that affected me extremely.

Ah, Louiſa! ſhall ever any lord elect of mine, preſume to abridge my powers of ſuccouring diſtreſs?—no, I would ſooner renounce the ſex, and ſwear eternal celibacy, than the gratification of one paſſion ſhould ever occaſion ſuch an outrage on humanity.

Adieu, my dear,

ever your's,

AUGUSTA CONWAY.

LET-

LETTER IV.

To Sydney St. Aubyn, Esq.

Matlock.

Brook-Dale, Devon.

Honored Sir,

SEEING what your honor is hinting at about Miſs Conway, I make free to inform you that all the talk here is about her marrying the Colonel; but nevertheleſs the ſervants ſeem to think that within theſe few days, their young lady begins to waver; to be ſure, the Colonel is a fine man to look upon, and has immenſe eſtates and riches in Ireland, where I find he is to take his bride ſoon after the ceremony—but, heaven bleſs

bleſs me, what does ſhe want with fortune that has ſuch large poſſeſſions of her own? It is not wealth that can ſecure her happineſs, any otherwiſe than it enlarges her power of doing good, and making every body about her comfortable. Miſs Auguſta's maid was here yeſterday with a meſſage from the dear lady about my little charge, and ſhe thinks things are not in ſuch forwardneſs as report ſays; the Colonel, to be ſure, is in the houſe, and never hardly ſtirs from her ſide.—Ah, Sir, what fatal miſunderſtanding could it be that made ſuch a breach between you and dear Miſs Conway?—Never was a couple ſo well ſuited—forgive my boldneſs, but I often cry by myſelf when I think how near every thing was to make you both happy in each other, when it ſuddenly broke off—

Provi-

Providence, I hope, will order all for the beſt: but indeed, honored Sir, I think if you had ſubmitted a little, it would have been well at laſt.—Depend upon my writing as often as I can get any tidings worth relating. I bleſs God that I can uſe my pen. A little education was all my poor parents could beſtow on me. There were ſeven of us, and the ſcanty income of a country curate could not admit of his doing much for his children. I pray on my knees for your honor's everlaſting proſperity, as indeed I am in duty bound; and the ſweet little fellow in the cradle, would, if he knew how, join in bleſſing his honored benefactor—he thrives charmingly.

I am, worthy Sir,

Your's dutifully to command,

GRACE CLEMENTS.

LET-

LETTER V.

To Oswald Herbert, Esq.*

At the Cecil-Street-Coffee-Houſe.

The Moat-Houſe, Thurſday.

EVERY thing goes on ſwimmingly, and it muſt be a curſed trick of dame Fortune's that can mar me now.—*Thou* wouldſt ſwear I was ſincerely enamoured, ſo uniform and undeviating are my devotions at this haughty beauty's ſhrine.—For Heaven's ſake, Oſwald, be upon thy guard that not a ſentence tranſpires.

* Theſe gentlemen are always *ſoi-diſant.* 'Squires amongſt each other.

pires but amongſt the *junto* immediately concerned. I am ſometimes troubled with a few lurking doubts about the extent of this ſplendid fortune I am in queſt of. My fancy, I own, is eternally feeding on it, and my nights are enchanted with golden dreams; but if after all it ſhould turn out a *moon-ſhine* purſuit, I ſhall certainly do thee an effectual miſchief, for ſuffering thyſelf to have been the agent and dupe of thy patron, Lucifer. But that I am a lover, whoſe paſſion is too pure, and at the ſame time too violent, to be controled by the ſordid influence of intereſt—but that I have poſſeſſions of my own to a vaſt extent, inſomuch, *that I am myſelf almoſt a ſtranger to their value;* I would venture ſome gentle hint that might lead to an explanation about theſe fifty thou-

ſand

ſand pounds—it is an aukward buſineſs, you'll ſay, and portends danger, for if by enquiring after my miſtreſs's wealth, my own ſhould, by ſome unlucky miſunderſtanding, become the ſubject of inveſtigation, good bye to the whole project; and thou and I, and the whole ſet of us, routed and diſcomfited, muſt fly—but whither, I defy thy ſubtlety to deviſe; the Holy Land is ſhut againſt moſt of us while juſtice reigns, and I ſee no alternative but the gaming table or the road.

How is the Oxford-ſtreet widow? there *was* a certainty in that buſineſs, though the proſpect might not be ſo inviting; certainly ſome of you might contrive a ſcheme to keep things in order there, that in caſe of a miſcarriage here, there might be ſome chance of a

reſerve—Suppoſe I were to be ſeverely afflicted with the gout, and with ſome peeviſh, rich old uncle at Bath—I could fabricate a letter which Hogan might convey to her in the green livery, and the amorous matron might ſtill be brought about; for may I periſh, Oſwald, if I do not think it too good a thing to be abandoned.

Conſult, as often as opportunity offers, with M'Donald, Carter, Hogan, and Dignam; they are fellows of tried integrity, and will ſtick to the cauſe; O'Dwyer I have ſome ſuſpicion of, he is a faint-hearted ſpalpeen, and it would be adviſeable for the preſent to keep him a little in the dark, without venturing on an open rupture; the fellow has not reſolution enough to keep himſelf ſober; he calls it the prejudice of an early habit,

and takes no pains to abandon it; ſuch a man is dangerous to a connexion where caution and circumſpection are indiſpenſibly neceſſary to its ſucceſs—for thyſelf, Oſwald, I hail thee a paragon, accompliſhed, faithful, and diſcreet, and be aſſured thou ſhalt yet bleſs the day thou ſufferedſt thyſelf to be perſuaded to renounce thy native land (which had uſed thee, as well as the reſt of us, very uncourteouſly) and become a ſharer in the adventitious fortunes of thy friend.

Adieu, be vigilant,

ANNESLY ALDERTON.

P. S. Thou muſt take eſpecial care by a punctual correſpondence with O'Brien, to get informed from time to time of the motions

motions of the gentleman whoſe name I have made free with—it would be the devil if we ſhould happen to claſh any where!

LETTER VI.

To Miss Augusta Conway,

At the Moat-House, Brook-Dale,
near ***** Devon.

London, Thursday Evening.

MY dear, amiable, strange, inconsiderate Augusta, what are you about? Your letter, like the checquered mornings of April, teems with sun-shine and with tears; and I feel myself more than ever disposed to regret that so unaccountable a mixture should form the composition of my best beloved friend.

Why,

Why, my dear girl, are you ſo provokingly indifferent to the world's opinion of you? whilſt the good you are conſtantly doing by ſtealth, ſleeps in the boſom of private gratitude, the buſy voice of cenſure is every where induſtriouſly magnifying your little imperfections, and tarniſhing the luſtre of a character that, I know, ought to be unſullied——

" On eagle's wings immortal ſlanders
" flie,
" Whilſt virtuous actions are but born
" and die."

You have not unfrequently attacked me, my dear, with a petulance, little ſhort of aſperity, when, acting from the immediate impulſe of honor, I have

 pleaded

pleaded for the amiable St. Aubyn; I own I exerted myſelf with uncommon earneſtneſs in his behalf, becauſe I was convinced of his merit, and wiſhed *you* to diſcover and to reward it. And think you, Auguſta, that in the confined circles of private life, you are to expect an opportunity of ſelecting a lover, all-accompliſhed and unexceptionably qualified to form the huſband to your mind? truſt me, my dear girl, this is an extravagant notion, unlikely to be ever realized, and is, indeed, ſeldom to be met with, but in the *accommodating* pages of fiction and romance.

I admit that the Colonel has a finer perſon than St. Aubyn—but will you, for a moment, contend that he has that delicate ſoftneſs, that pleaſing paſſport to our affections, which, with ſuch inexpreſ-

ſible grace, diſtinguiſhes every action of St. Aubyn's? I think, (but do not let it alarm you, Auguſta!) that I can diſcover a harſh auſterity on the Colonel's brow, which, to me, ſeems inconſiſtent with the *tendriſſements* I ſhould expect in a huſband; I have ſaid ſo before, and even hinted a ſuſpicion or two further, but you peeviſhly interrupted my unwelcome remarks, by obſerving that what I was *pleaſed* to find fault with, was no other than a becoming manly dignity, peculiar to men of military proweſs. I bowed to your ſuperior penetration, and was content to ſhift the ſubject.

One thing, however, ſtrikes me as very remarkable, and I will mention it. Until the Colonel found means to gain this aſcendancy over your affections, you were ever ready to agree with me in ridi-

culing

culing the foibles and the peculiarities of your lovers; and in examining the different pretenſions of the long train of ſighing candidates, I do not believe we ever before had a ſentiment in the leaſt diſſimilar to each other.

Well, my dear, I only ſay, Heaven direct you for the beſt; I have no prejudices, no partialities; but I own I cannot help wiſhing it had happened that the lord of your affections had been indebted to England for his birth, and that the ceremony of tranſporting my beloved friend beyond the ſeas, had been diſpenſed with; then, perchance, when fate had been graciouſly pleaſed to beſtow me a helpmate in my turn, we might have reſided together in the ſame neighbourhood, and perpetuated 'till death, that friendſhip which has been the pride of

our

our earlier years; and believe me, my dear, it is the voice of pure affection that ſpeaks on a ſubject neceſſarily ſo intereſting to the happineſs of my Auguſta.

Adieu,

I am ever your's,

LOUISA WENTWORTH.

LET-

LETTER VII.

To Stafford Sullivan, Esq.

Matlock, Tuesday.

I HAVE ſcraped acquaintance with a very agreeable, gentleman-like Hibernian, who came a few days ſince, an invalid, here. You know my general prejudices againſt the country, but it would be abſurd to ſuffer them to extend to every individual, who may chance to emigrate from it. Politeneſs, affability, and good ſenſe, always carry with them their own recommendations; and this gentleman, who is in the army, and has attained

attained the rank of colonel, poſſeſſes theſe qualities in an eminent degree.

Genuine merit will, ſooner or later, be diſcovered, without that ſupercilious egotiſm, ſo peculiar to vain boaſters; and a perfect gentleman is a character that needs only to be known to be reſpected. Colonel Alderton is a fine manly fellow, about five and thirty, but the ravages of diſeaſe have a good deal impaired him; he looks pale and emaciated; yet, withal, poſſeſſes a happy flow of ſpirits, an inexhauſtible fund of humour, that regulated by politeneſs and complacency, makes his ſociety very deſirable.

We lodge at the ſame houſe, and are in the habits of taking our meals together; he has ſeen a good deal of the world, is well informed on intereſting ſubjects,

ſubjects, and, unlike the generality of his countrymen, is ſilent as to the number and extent of his intrigues: in the courſe of half the time I have been upon a familiar footing with the Colonel, a leſs modeſt Iriſhman would have recounted the names and additions of an hundred deflowered virgins and incontinent wives, with the uſual portion of devoted widows and languiſhing old maids. But it is far otherwiſe with the Colonel; he candidly owns he has been indiſcreet and gay, but does not think it neceſſary to entertain me with the number of victims that have been ſacrificed to his perfidy.

Such an aſſociate could not fail being very acceptable to me at this criſis. Heretofore, I have been too much accuſtomed to indulge in ſolitary rambles, where reflexion, of no very welcome kind,

was

was ſure to overtake me—and many an untold ſigh has eſcaped my boſom—but I have done, Stafford——You begin to ſuſpect to what point I am verging, and I had better take my leave, before theſe ſuſpicions are ſuffered to gain ground——

Adieu——

SYDNEY ST. AUBYN.

LETTER VIII.

To Colonel Alderton,

At the Poſt-Office, ***** Devon.

London, Thurſday Night.

WE are ſadly diſconcerted—poor Herbert is arreſted at the ſuit of the coffee-houſe keeper—and languiſhes, pennyleſs, in *durance-vile*. *O'Dwyer* has deſerted, and gone upon a freſh ſcent to Bath—The reſt of our groupe cut juſt as deplorable a figure, as any ſet of undone dogs ever did yet. You muſt direct in future to *me* at the Cannon; but—between ourſelves—unleſs your matters are ſpeedily brought

brought to an iſſue, the gap will be blown, and we muſt diſperſe, or be *fixed*—You underſtand me!

Your's,

PATRICK NUGENT.

LETTER IX.

To Sydney St. Aubyn, Esq.

London, Thurſday.

YOUR laſt comprizes a myſtery which puzzles me extremely, and unleſs you are impoſed upon, or have miſtaken the name, this Colonel Alderton, whom you are in the habits of intimacy with, this pale, emaciated beau, is no other than the lord of Auguſta Conway's affections—the happy man who *was* to have conducted her to the ſacred altar of Hymen.—But the lady, I ſuppoſe, has been amuſing herſelf, as uſual, with

with the gratification of ſome favourite caprice, and the match is broken off.

Yet how the figure you deſcribe, (differing ſo widely from what has hitherto been reported of him) could have found his way to Auguſta's impenetrable heart, heightens the myſtery, and involves me in doubt and perplexity.

Nay, further, I had a letter from the Rev. Mr. Downes, ſo late as ſaturday laſt; and he tells me, that preparations are making for the marriage, the day for which is abſolutely fixed, and near at hand.—Yet, you ſay, Colonel Alderton has been ſome days at Matlock. That there ſhould be two gentlemen of that name, both colonels in the army, and from Ireland, is very ſingular; and but that I have too high an opinion of Miſs Conway's penetration, I frankly declare I

ſhould ſuſpect one of them to be an impoſtor—Certain it is, that a doubt lurks in my mind, and whilſt it does, I ſhall not reſt 'till I am ſatisfied. Do you, Sydney, conſult with, and interrogate, your friend, whilſt I look after the other——

Adieu—in haſte,

STAFFORD SULLIVAN.

LET-

LETTER X.

To the Rev. Joseph Downes.

At the Rectory-Houſe, Brook-Dale, Devon.

London, Thurſday.

Dear Sir,

I SHALL be particularly obliged by your forwarding a line with all convenient expedition to inform me the preſent ſtate of affairs with the family at the Moat-Houſe;—whether the young lady's marriage is likely to take place, or if any thing threatens to protract it—at the ſame time, as you have ſeen Colonel

Alderton, (the gentleman who, I underſtand, is deſtined to be the happy man) I ſhould wiſh to know if you have ever heard, or can by any means diſcover, to what regiment he belongs, and where it is ſtationed at preſent.—This is for a little private ſatisfaction, which, I am perſuaded, if you knew my motives for obtaining, you would readily aſſiſt in affording me.

I beg my reſpectful remembrances to your amiable family, and am,

With great regard, dear Sir,

your's ſincerely,

STAFFORD SULLIVAN.

LET-

LETTER XI.

To Sydney St. Aubyn, Esq.

The Moat-House, Devon,
Midnight.

THOMPSON comes expreſs acroſs the country with this, the lazy poſt being unable to keep pace with my rapid wiſhes to communicate to you the important tidings I am charged with.

I knew I had a faithful agent in Mr. Downes, the worthy rector of Brook-Dale, and I made no ſcruple to entruſt him with a commiſſion to enquire, as privately as poſſible, into the *redoubtable* Colonel's circumſtances and connexions.

—Mr.

—Mr. Downes readily underſtood the nature of the hint, and exerted himſelf very ably on the occaſion—but, after all, there was a ſhade upon the whole, which he found himſelf incapable of penetrating thro', and as this rather confirmed than removed our ſuſpicions, he recommended to me to loſe no time, but repair immediately to the *Moat-Houſe*.—Mrs. Villers, he ſaid, had always expreſſed the warmeſt attachments to me, and, upon every occaſion, had done honor to my character; independent of which, ſhe was herſelf ſo well-bred and worthy a woman, that it was impoſſible for her to miſconceive the nature of my intentions.

I am rather an idle fellow, you know, Sydney, and ſuch an expedition could not

not be attended with any inconveniences to me.

A poſt-chaiſe and four hacks, each ſtage, brought me to * * * * * about nine in the evening—at firſt I thought of ſetting forwards immediately to the *Moat-Houſe*, but I afterwards conſidered that it might ſpread an alarm, and that it would be more diſcreet to defer it 'till the morning.

I thought the night long and lingering, and was heartily glad when morning dawned.—It was about nine when I arrived at Mrs. Villers's, and having enquired for *her*, and ſent in my name, I was inſtantly uſhered into the breakfaſting-room, where the family were aſſembled.

Mrs. Villers received me with her uſual ceremonious formality, but was all po-

liteneſs

liteneſs and attention.—Auguſta ſat between a gentleman (whoſe features I had, at the firſt glance, ſome recollection of,) and her couſin Sophia; there was another young lady preſent, who was a ſtranger to me.——

Mrs. Villers introduced me.—" Mr. Sullivan,"—and turning to the gentleman, but at the ſame time addreſſing me; " this, Sir, is Colonel Alderton."—I had made my obeiſance, and was looking rather earneſtly at the gentleman, when I obſerved him pull out his handkerchief, confuſed and diſconcerted—at the inſtant my recollection was alive—and in the aſſumed character of Colonel Alderton, I diſcovered the lurking features of the villain *Douglas*. My embaſſy was ripe, and I determined inſtantly to bring forward my credentials—addreſſing the gentleman

tleman—"I preſume, Sir, you are indebted to the gracious favor of your ſovereign for changing your *name*, ſince, when laſt I had the honor of ſeeing you, I underſtood it was Douglas."—He did not ſeem to underſtand me, and was ſilent.—Miſs Conway, a little piqued at my unceremonious manner of challenging her hero, anſwered for him—"If you know this gentleman at all, Mr. Stafford, you certainly know him to be Colonel Alderton"—and ſhe coloured.—"I am not to be amuſed from my point, Miſs Conway, when I feel myſelf engaged in the cauſe of truth and juſtice—this fellow is a rank impoſtor—a deſperate adventurer;—the real colonel Alderton is, at this moment, at Matlock, the intimate companion of my friend St. Aubyn."—"Damnation—Sir," ſaid our

cholerick hero, "what do you mean—by *Jaſus*, but the hoſpitality of this roof is your protection, or I would make an example of you in a moment."—I heard him with a provoking ſneer—(you have ſeen me, Sydney, on ſuch an occaſion,)—"Hoſpitable, undoubtedly, Mr. *Douglas* (with a violent emphaſis) may have found this roof, but I am afraid, when he comes to be known, he will not be equally obliged to it for protection:—in ſhort, ladies, I came in conſequence of a diſcovery, which nothing ſhort of a miracle could have effected; to reſcue an amiable young lady from the clutches of an Hibernian fortune-hunter, who, by a counterfeit character, has juggled himſelf into this family; the plot has been ably projected, and, no doubt, was worth all the riſque attending it.—*Gentlemen* of this

this deſcription, are not eaſily diſcouraged on ſuch occaſions;—even now, he is indebted to the unbluſhing effrontery of his country, for that ſteady countenance of villainous compoſure with which he hears me."—Miſs Conway looked ſerious, and trembled—the aunt turned pale as death—ſhe made an effort to ſpeak, but I ſaw it was with difficulty.—"Mrs. Villers will forgive this abrupt intruſion, this violent diſturbance of her domeſtic harmony—and ſhe will do me the juſtice to remember, that I am a man of honor, incapable of advancing a falſhood on any conſideration.—It is true, I am the friend of an injured man, the amiable, the deſerving St. Aubyn; but that does not leſſen my attachment to merit wherever I may find it.—Miſs Conway will forgive me, for admoniſh-

ing her to turn with execration from a wretch, whom I pronounce to be the baſe unnatural father of that deſerted infant, at preſent under Mrs. Clements's care—the murderer of its helpleſs mother.—Seduced from her happy home, the wretched Maria raſhly relied on this villain's honor, and committed herſelf to *his* protection—*he* abandoned and betrayed her into miſery and perdition. Happily for herſelf, ſhe found a ſhelter in death;—and her infant was conſigned to ſtrangers: whilſt *he* lives, and it ſeems, lives with impunity, to poiſon the peace of more families, and meditate more ſacrifices to his villainy.—"Anſwer me, Mr. *Douglas*,"—turning ſternly round to him, "dare you controvert a ſyllable of what I have juſt uttered?"

The

The detected miſcreant attempted to ſtammer out an incoherent ſentence or two, which but more effectually eſtabliſhed his guilt; when a ſervant, who had been ſent to the Poſt-Office, opportunely brought in two letters—one for Mrs. Villers, the other addreſſed to Colonel Alderton.—I ſnatched them both from the ſervant, and deſired him to withdraw—the fellow muſt at the moment have ſet me down for a madman, for he had no ſooner ſurrendered them, than he ſcampered away, and was out of the room in an inſtant.—I gave one of the letters to Mrs. Villers—the other I detained.—" This, ladies, will, I dare ſay, be ſome teſtimony of my aſſertion, and throw ſome light on the preſent tranſaction;"—and ſo ſaying, without farther ceremony, I broke open the let-

ter—the contents were as follows, which I read aloud :——

" To Colonel Annesley Alderton.

Poſt-Office.——

" FOR God's ſake, *Jack*, con-
" trive to raiſe a few guineas to ex-
" tricate Herbert, or he will be
" miſchievous---they have moved
" him to Newgate, and he ſwears
" vengeance if ſomething is not
" immediately done for him.—What
" the plague are you about—why
" not ſtrike whilſt the iron is hot?—
" We are all bankrupts here, and
" unable to get a meal without a
" curſed ſour face from the land-
" lord, accompanied with a ſneer
" that denotes danger.—Here have

" we

" we lived three months entirely
" upon promiſes—a very aukward
" article to negociate, and very un-
" likely to ſatisfy hungry bellies
" with.—Look to it, *Jack*, and ſend
" us up a five guinea bill, which ſhall
" be faithfully diſtributed.

" Thine, accordingly,

" P. DIGNAM."

The daſtardly ſcoundrel was now quite creſt-fallen—his impudence betrayed and forſook him—Auguſta was ſatisfied—ſhe aroſe from her chair, to which ſhe had hitherto been rivetted, and moving acroſs the room to where I was ſtanding, ſhe did me the honor to lean upon me a moment—but immediately recovering herſelf,

ſelf, ſhe gave me one of thoſe looks of heaven-born complacency, yet of commanding dignity, that pierced my very ſoul—it ſpoke her gratitude eloquently.—"Well, Sir," ſaid ſhe, turning to Douglas, "it is unneceſſary for you to expect *I* am prepared to inſult you, unworthy as you are—you have heard a very ſerious charge, and ſeem unable to refute it:—my heart, therefore, tells me it muſt pronounce you guilty.—I poſſeſs a very accommodating diſpoſition," continued ſhe, "and the loſs of any lover never yet gave me a moment's uneaſineſs;—but when I find myſelf ſo nearly being the dupe of ſuch conſummate artifice and villainy, every other conſideration is abſorbed in the joy of having eſcaped.—But before you go from hence, defeated in your wicked career, have at leaſt the

candour

candour to declare how you have contrived, with ſuch wonderful adroitneſs, to impoſe upon us all.—Our attorney, in London, is a cautious man;—he aſſured us, that upon the ſtricteſt enquiry, you were a man of family and fortune in Ireland.—Even the gentlemen to whom you referred him, are ſolicitors of eminence, and it is not poſſible for us to ſuppoſe, that any mercenary motive could induce them to countenance ſo dangerous a deception."——

Douglas had got hold of his hat, and was careleſsly twirling it round, apparently indifferent and unconcerned.—I waited a moment to hear his *reply*, but he was ſtill ſilent.—I therefore undertook to anſwer for him—" That Colonel Alderton (the real gentleman of that name) is of reputable character and connexions,

nexions, I have no kind of doubt—and the attornies, in London, who ſpoke of him in the manner they did, certainly ſuppoſed they were doing nothing but juſtice to a worthy client.—They dreamt not, becauſe the enquiry came thro' too reputable a channel, that any counterfeit was ſuſpected—they dreamt not that they were furthering the deſigns of a deſtitute, raſcally adventurer.—Mr. Douglas," turning to him, " if you have any ſenſe of ſhame, you muſt feel ſufficiently mortified at this expoſure, without any farther reproaches *here*.—You have certainly the appearance of a gentleman, and I have no doubt poſſeſs abilities, that exerted in a proper way, might have promoted your advancement in life, and led you to fortune.—I regret that human nature ſhould be capable, in

ſuch

ſuch a form, of ſuch degradation.—Go, Sir.—As the protector, the friend of thoſe ladies, I am bound to *continue* the taſk I ſet out upon, and that cannot be until you have withdrawn, not only from this houſe, but from the country.—That young lady, Sir, might undoubtedly proſecute you; but I ſee a tenderneſs, or rather a trait of humanity, that recoils at ſuch a proceeding;"—(ſhe was abſolutely weeping—for the firſt time I ſaw Auguſta Conway in tears)—"luckily, however, excepting in the inſtance of the letters, which I own I rather impetuouſly ſnatched from the ſervant, nothing injurious to you has yet tranſpired, ſo as to gratify the malice of mean minds.—Keep the ſecret, then, for your own ſake—and, in future, remember that no purſuit can ever avail you, that has not honor and inte-

grity to ſanction it."—The ladies now made a motion to withdraw, and the folding doors which led upon the leſſer lawn being open, I conducted them through—they took no ſort of notice of Mr. Douglas.——

I was back in an inſtant, and found our diſappointed adventurer muttering ſomething to himſelf, that implied ſatisfaction for the injury. I had nothing farther to ſay to him, and, therefore, having rung the bell, I told the ſervant that attended, —"*that gentleman* had an immediate call to London, and his horſe and ſervant muſt be inſtantly in readineſs."——

Knowing ſo much of Douglas's character, and having ſo much reaſon cordially to deſpiſe him, I yet could not help feeling a tranſitory ſentiment of pity for him;

him; his perſon was really elegant, and take him all in all, I really do not think I ever ſaw a more perfect repreſentation of a gentleman.—He ſighed bitterly, and made an attempt to ſpeak—but felt himſelf unequal.—I am not certain, but I think I ſaw a tear ſtarting as he retired.—

What the conjectures of the ſervants were, I have yet had no opportunity of diſcovering.—Maſter and man both ſet off together, and were ſoon out of ſight.—

When the gates were ſhut, I returned to the family, whom I found ſtill in the garden—Auguſta was aſtoniſhingly compoſed, which I did not think a very favourable circumſtance, ſince it was more likely ſhe would feel it afterwards—but her ſpirits are naturally elevated.—She took hold of my arm—and led me to the bower—" Come here, you modern

knight of chivalry, you protector of credulous damſels;"—and ſhe ſeated herſelf by my ſide—"Mr. Sullivan—to be ſerious, you have certainly a very powerful claim upon my gratitude, for the important ſervices you have rendered me.—But before I pour forth my thanks, permit me to aſk you if St. Aubyn knows any thing of this buſineſs.—Excuſe me, Sir, I am not ſeeking to leſſen Mr. St. Aubyn's merit as your friend—I know he has a mind ſuperior to the unmanly art of triumphing, becauſe this may appear a moritfying diſcovery.—St. Aubyn and I can never come together—this recent tranſaction ſtamps it impoſſible—not but that I feel it a juſtice to own that I had a prejudice againſt your friend's private character, which I am now ſatisfied was founded in error, and I ought to

retract

retract it.—I was informed that *he* was the father of the infant in the cottage, and all the guilt which Douglas merits, I had in my own mind faſtened on St. Aubyn.—Mrs. Clements has repeatedly declared, that on *him* ſhe depends chiefly for its ſupport.—I am ſorry I have done St. Aubyn ſo much injuſtice;—tell him, ſo, Mr. Stafford—tell him I *feel* that I have injured him;—this you would, I dare ſay, have done, had I not deſired you—for I ſuppoſe you, gentlemen, are in the habits of communicating theſe matters, in like manner as we women reveal our little domeſtic occurrences to each other.—In regard to the event of to-day, believe me, Mr. Stafford, on my honor, tho' my pride is rather hurt, I have more reaſon to rejoice;—for the laſt week I have had very unpleaſant fore-

bodings—I wanted a decent pretext to put off my marriage, and I really believe I ſhould have found one, before the day came---You have kindly ſaved me the trouble---and I here aſſure you, Mr. Stafford, that no conſideration on earth, ſhall ever induce me to violate the vow of celibacy which I have within this hour, and in this ſpot, ſolemnly made."—

We were interrupted at this criſis by the appearance of Mrs. Villers, who came with a letter open in her hand---had you been a few minutes later, Mr. Stafford, this morning, your commiſſion would have been anticipated--and ſhe put into my hands the paper—I read as follows:

To Madam Villers,

At the Moat-Houſe—

Madam,

" THIS ſerves to inform you, that it is in my power, if I pleaſe, to give your Ladyſhip ſome intelligence of great importance to your family.—I am entirely diſintereſted in ſo doing, but ſhould wiſh to do one good act in my life if poſſible.—your Ladyſhip muſt ſee me, myſelf, but not at your houſe.—I will come at command to the neareſt public-houſe, where you will pleaſe to give me the meeting privately, all depending on due ſecrecy.—I ſhall want

five guineas for travelling expences, being in diſtreſs.——

Your's, Madam,

PHELIM O'DWYER."

" P. S. Pleaſe to write by return of poſt, and direct to me at the —— Inn in Bath."

This was manifeſtly from one of the parties concerned in this black buſineſs, and tho' the facts required no farther confirmation, I thought it expedient to adviſe Mrs. Villers to ſend off a line to ſignify that a gentleman would be with him in a day or two.—I had previouſly determined to take Bath in my way to

town,

town, and ſhould therefore have an opportunity of examining this fellow myſelf.——

Agitated by the events of the day, Miſs Conway, as I found, having exhauſted her ſpirits, towards the evening grew ſerious and languid—ſhe came indeed to dinner, but I ſaw ſhe had been weeping—her eyes were red, and ſhe was apparently abſorbed in thought—a very unuſual thing for Auguſta Conway to be ſeen in.—She retired ſoon after dinner, having firſt, with her accuſtomed grace, made *me* an offering of her ſincereſt thanks for the trouble I had taken to ſerve her—and deſired me to preſent her compliments to —— Mr. St. Aubyn.——

The reſt of the day went off chearleſs and gloomy—(the family being denied

to

to all viſitors.)—I ſaw no more of Auguſta, but her aunt inſiſted on my accepting an elegant diamond ring, as a teſtimony of her acknowledgments.——

I write this whilſt all the family are at reſt—and Thompſon will ſtart with it as ſoon as its light.—I go forward in the morning to Bath, where he is to come to me—from thence I ſhall write again.

Adieu,

STAFFORD SULLIVAN.

LETTER XII.

To Patrick Nugent, Esq.

Cannon Coffee-House, Bath.

BLOWN, detected, disgraced, and ruined, I have flown to this place for a momentary shelter to breathe in.—

In the general confusion of these *motley* scenes, I have a chance to escape a little while unnoticed.

That villain Herbert has undone us.—You say he is in gaol—there let him lie and languish with all the curses of aggravated disappointment on his treacherous head.

Perish

Periſh the raſcal that having once agreed to embark in, and to ſupport, any cauſe, deſerts and betrays it !

You will perhaps doubt the aſſertion, Nugent, but by Heaven I *felt* my diſgrace—born to better proſpects in life than I have lately given my mind to, and inheriting from a family (which I have eternally diſgraced) the ſentiments with the education of a gentleman, I cannot quite forget what I ought to be. —I feel that I am acting unworthy of myſelf, but have not fortitude enough to forbear.

Had I ſucceeded in this laſt project, I had determined (after having diſtributed handſomely amongſt you) to have renounced the party, and to have embraced a ſyſtem of reformation.—I meant

to

to have been the huſband worthy of Auguſta Conway.——

But the golden illuſion is vaniſhed—and I ſolemnly and firmly declare off.—I have done with negociations that bring ſo mortifying a ſting in the detection.

One ſolitary half guinea, and a bad ſixpence, conſtitute the bulk of my fortunes.—What plan I ſhall purſue, or where to take myſelf, I know not.——

I wiſh thee well——Adieu,

Thine, plainly,

JOHN DOUGLAS.

LET-

LETTER XIII.*

To Stafford Sullivan, Esq.

Matlock, Wedneſday.

A MIND like your's, Stafford, derives private gratifications in the conſciouſneſs of doing good, far more valuable

* The next letter in this collection is from Miſs Conway to her friend Louiſa Wentworth, but as it contains little more in ſubſtance than may be gathered from Mr. Sullivan's, we have omitted it. —Auguſta acknowledges, with becoming candor (and, as ſhe ſays, with heart-felt conviction) the juſtice of her friend's hints, and declares herſelf hurt, when ſhe recollects with what blind, ſtubborn indifference ſhe received them.—She comments very ſparingly on Douglas's conduct, and concludes her letter with mentioning the ſolemnity of the vow ſhe had privately made in the bower—

juſt

valuable than the world's applauſes—and I think I almoſt envy you that which has reſulted from the important ſervice you have been happily enabled to render Auguſta Conway.—I ſee the hand of Providence ſignally held out on this occaſion, or the uncertainty of my checquered purſuits would never have brought me here, ſo opportunely to have become acquainted with Colonel Alderton.

I mark

juſt adding, that ſhe reſts on the affection of Louiſa for conſenting to conſign the ſubject to oblivion—unleſs ſhe ſhould think her indiſcretions ought to be more ſeverely puniſhed, and her own private feelings more exquiſitely wounded.—Here the letter cloſes, and ſeems to have been folded up to be ſent away—but was afterwards broke open, and on the reverſe of the cover were written the following lines:

"I am not well, my dear—my head is very "giddy, and I have had a dreadful night.—— "Sophia will let you know if I am worſe."

I mark your hint, my friend, and I promiſe on my honor that I will not ſuffer my peace to be diſturbed by the illuſory chimeras of HOPE.—Yet I ſhall betray the ſelfiſhneſs of my nature, when I declare, that I am not diſpleaſed with the dear girl's vow of celibacy—the pangs of diſappointed love are not aggravated by the mortifying reflection, that a more happy rival is bleſt with poſſeſſion.——

At preſent Colonel Alderton is a ſtranger to what has paſſed, and from *me* he will never hear of it.—Should ſuch a circumſtance tranſpire in a place like this, every tongue would find freſh matter to buſy itſelf with, and I might perhaps be ſurpriſed into an involuntary glow of reſentment, were I to hear the ſacred name of Auguſta Conway irreverently

verently made the hacknied ſubject of common-place talk.——

Happily the infernal plot was diſcovered, and I am once more relieved from the apprehenſions of the hated marriage. —The conqueſt the impoſtor made, was only over the vanity of Auguſta—amidſt a thouſand tranſcendant virtues, ſhe incautiouſly ſuffered this foible to come forward, and acting like a faithleſs centinel that had been confided in, it betrayed her.——

I have frequently obſerved our public places thronged with this deſcription of gentry, and have ſatisfied myſelf, that by ſome means or other, they ſucceeded in general, and met with encouragement, or there could never be ſuch a number of new candidates continually on the watch for the vacant hearts of amorous

widows, who gloſs over their impurities with glittering gold.—Were the modeſt and leſs indiſcreet ladies, who frequent thoſe places, to aſſociate together, and form one general reſolution to diſcountenance thoſe who encourage ſuch deſperate adventurers, and remembering the words of the poet,* always watch them narrowly, and have ſuſpicion and caution conſtantly awake, the miſchief would in time effect it's own deſtruction, or at any rate be confined to the few empty unintereſting females, whoſe ſenſibility or pride could not take the alarm, when they found themſelves excluded from the more reputable circles.

I have

* " Nature ne'er deſign'd 'em ſenſe,
" But gave 'em legs and impudence
——" Paſt all underſtanding."

I have ſaid more on this ſubject than I intended—but I really feel for the honor of my country-women, and lament that an occaſion ſhould ever happen, when one deſerving female falls into the ſnare thus inſidiouſly ſpread by the worſt, becauſe they are in general the moſt deſperate outcaſts of ſociety.——

My acquaintance with Colonel Alderton, who does credit to his country, is conſiderably improved ſince I wrote laſt.

I wiſh you could have an opportunity of ſeeing him—he has already benefited by the ſalubrious baths of this place, and begins to have a faint colour on his cheek, which I tell him is the welcome harbinger of returning health.

We are to have an addition to our party in a day or two—the Colonel it ſeems has a ſiſter, who accompanies a new-married couple hither, and will ſtay ſome weeks with us—he is ſilent as to the beauty or accompliſhments of the lady—but obſerved, that he ſhall make a point of taking his ſiſter aſide, and guarding her incautious heart againſt the attractions of your friend.—Alas, Staffford, my reign for conqueſt is over—I have ever held it an unmanly, as well as a cruel violation, to attempt to rob an innocent mind of that treaſure, which its affections conſtitute.—The foſtering boſom of friendſhip may afford ſhelter for thoſe who ſuffer under the ravages of fortune, but whither can the forlorn wanderer fly, whoſe peace of mind is irre-

irretrievably loſt by the ſurrender of its deareſt affections ?

Adieu—I ſhall write again ſoon.—

Your's affectionately,

SYDNEY ST. AUBYN.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

To Miss Augusta Conway.

London, Tuesday.

AND does my beloved Auguſta think it neceſſary to beſpeak her Louiſa's candor, whilſt, ſeeming to *doubt* the ſincerity of her affection, ſhe makes ſo *formal* an appeal to her juſtice?—Has Louiſa ever ſhewn the moſt diſtant wiſh to give birth to one unpleaſant ſenſation in the boſom of her friend?—has ſhe ever ſeriouſly uttered a ſentence that was not dictated by the pureſt ſolicitude, and offered with the moſt friendly circumſpection?——

No

No—Auguſta, not for the world would I have riſqued an inſult to your feelings by reviving the hated ſubject—much leſs ſeek to offer the ordinary tribute of common-place conſolation—if this little rally appears a moment inexcuſeable, forgive me, my dear, for you really hurt me by your cold, ceremonious caution, and I could not help crying out.——

The melancholy billet added to your laſt, and written in ſuch extreme agitation, has coſt me many tears.—Heaven grant that this letter, on its arrival, may witneſs your perfect recovery, and that my Auguſta's anſwer may diſſipate thoſe painful apprehenſions which have filled the heart of her

LOUISA WENTWORTH.

LETTER XV.

To Sydney St. Aubyn, Esq.

Bath, Wedneſday.

I HAVE received a very friendly letter from Mrs. Villers, thanking me cordially for my attention and trouble in the late buſineſs; and informing me that her niece Auguſta is extremely indiſpoſed, and about to leave the country—this is exactly what I foreſaw—the lovely girl's pride has taken the alarm, and ſhe feels enough of the injury to ſuppoſe it impoſſible to eſcape the obſervation

vation of others.—Mrs. Villers is ſilent as to the place of her deſtination—but I have ſome idea that ſhe is inclined to venture on a little tour to the continent, and the plea of indiſpoſition is, I fancy, only aſſumed, to anſwer a prudent purpoſe, and ſuppreſs the enquiries of buſy curioſity.

At the rooms here a few evenings ſince, I had a ſalute, *en paſſant*, from the quondam Colonel Alderton—he had contrived to get footing in a genteel party of ladies, and abſolutely ſeemed to be honored with a good deal of their attention.—I returned his bow almoſt involuntarily, and before I had entirely recollected him; but took care afterwards to keep clear of him—it is not neceſſary that I ſhould become a *ſelf-*

dubbed Don Quixote on every occaſion, nor expoſe myſelf to the vengeance of ſuch a malignant ſet—in the language of Junius—tho' *ſome* would fight, others would aſſaſſinate.

O'Dwyer I ſaw ſoon after my arrival here—the fellow meant to be honeſt enough for our purpoſe, and very readily gave me information of all I knew before—however, conſidering that it might have been of uſe to us, I gave him a couple of guineas, with which he promiſed to decamp from Bath, and try if it were poſſible to get ſomething of a ſubſiſtence by honeſt means.—Perhaps at the moment he might mean it, but the reſolution was too flimſy, I fear, to be oppoſed to the force of evil communications.

I have

I have taken my old apartments at the widow's in the Creſcent, where you will direct to me.

Adieu—invariably yours,

STAFFORD SULLIVAN.

LETTER XVI.

To Miss Louisa Wentworth.

The Moat-House, Friday.

SORRY am I, dear Madam, to be the amanuenſis of my ſweet couſin Auguſta.—Your letter has been read to her, and ſhe deſires me to conjure you to forgive the haſty effuſions of an agitated mind; and when able to hold her pen, the dear girl ſays ſhe knows ſhe may rely on your affection for an advocate whilſt you peruſe her defence.—

Dr. R—— has alarmed us with ſome hints of my couſin's being in a decline—and has recommended a journey to Matlock—

Matlock—ill and languid as ſhe is, to-morrow is fixed for her to depart—I am to attend her, and ſhe has earneſtly deſired me from time to time to inform you the ſtate of her health—but I hope, ere long, ſhe will be able to undertake the taſk herſelf.

I remain, dear Madam,

Your's ſincerely,

SOPHIA BUTLER.

LETTER XVII.

To Stafford Sullivan, Esq.

At Bath.

Matlock, Tuesday.

I THOUGHT "when nature had finished the enchanting form of Augusta Conway, she had destroyed the "mould,"* and that her counter part was no where to be found—nor was it one of those partial inferences which love eagerly draws to nourish a favorite attachment.—You, Stafford, and not only *you*, but all the world, pronounced Augusta

* See Burgoyne's Comedy of the Heiress.

Auguſta Conway the phœnix of her ſex.

But the fond illuſion is flown—Auguſta is ever lovely, but her form, which fancy ſtill partially clings to, ſuffers in a compariſon with the tranſcendant excellencies of Emily Alderton.

This lovelieſt of women arrived here on ſaturday morning, whilſt the Colonel and I were taking an airing on horſeback, and we did not return 'till our accuſtomed hour of dreſſing for dinner—indeed I knew nothing of our charming viſitor until Colonel Alderton came into my chamber and announced her arrival. —" I have got a pleaſant ſort of a ſiſter " for you, St. Aubyn," ſays he, " to " trifle with—ſhe is come under convoy " of a worthy clergyman and his wife— " ſhe's a good girl—and I dare ſay you'll

" not diſlike her.—I have already en-
" gaged you to dine *en famillé* with us,
" and in leſs than half an hour I ſhall be
" at your ſervice to conduct you."

I had no other idea but of finding Miſs Alderton commonly agreeable, and was glad to have any thing of an addition to our party, to diverſify the ſcene a little—but when the Colonel, taking me by the arm, led me in, introducing me firſt to Mr. and Mrs. Burnaby, and then to his ſiſter, I ſtarted from the involuntary impulſe of ſurprize.—I have certainly ſeen many accompliſhed beauties, and gazed, enraptured, on theſe faſcinating maſter-pieces of happy nature —but never before were my ſenſes ſo thoroughly arreſted—and it is as impoſſible for me to deſcribe, ſo as to do juſtice to Miſs Alderton, as it would be

to

to animate the inſenſate ſtatue of the *Venus de Medicis*.—She was in a looſe, elegant undreſs, eaſy and unconfined, and received me with ſuch winning ſweetneſs, ſuch ſoft inexpreſſible complacency, that for the moment I fancied it viſionary.—" Siſter," ſaid the gallant Colonel, " this is a worthy character, whoſe friendſhip I am indebted to chance for.—We ſtumbled here, two wandering invalids, to court the roſy goddeſs, Hygeia, and by what you ſee of us, you may conclude, we have not been unſucceſsful viſitors."—" I always honored my brother's penetration," ſaid the charming girl, " in the choice of his friends, and I have now an additional reaſon to approve it."—This graceful compliment, delivered with ſuch artleſs, ſuch genuine ſimplicity, was peculiarly welcome

welcome to me, and I made, I fancy, ſome aukward kind of acknowledgment, but what it was I know not.—We dined—and I paſſed ſome of the moſt delightful hours I ever remember ſince —— Let us have done with compariſons.---The Colonel once or twice detected my eyes intenſely fixed on his lovely ſiſter, and rallied me on the occaſion---" take care of this *gay* friend of mine, Emily.

" If a man *talks* of love, with caution hear him,
" But if he *ſwears*, he'll certainly deceive you."

— " You are mighty conſiderate, brother, of a ſudden," returned Miſs Alderton, not at all embarraſſed; " but to me this *gay* friend of yours appears not of that

that deſcription to excite any kind of alarm---and it would certainly have been time enough for you to have guarded me againſt the OATH, after I had heard the gentleman *talk* on the ſubject."

"The eyes, Emily, are pretty credible tell-tales---and I have obſerved a few glances that were too *ſignificant* for me to miſtake their meaning."

The Colonel was right---for I had been gazing on his ſiſter almoſt all the time I had been with her---and now that a little familiarity had ſobered me, I did not, to be ſure, caſt ſuch fixed glances at her, but ſtole an occaſional look whenever opportunity offered, and by my confuſion, betrayed a conſciouſneſs of the theft.

We had a good deal of pleaſant argument on the ſubject of love, and eyes,

and

and hearts, and darts---thro' the whole of which Miſs Alderton acquitted herſelf with wonderful wit and pleaſantry, and diſcovered a partiality for, or rather a deference to my opinion, which I could not but be proud of.

When we were together, Alderton, in his uſual vein of pleaſantry and good humour, demanded my opinion of his ſiſter.——

" St. Aubyn---be candid---for I pro-
" miſe, on my word, that I ſhall never
" repeat it, nor do I hold *any* correſ-
" pondence with *any* perſon who is
" likely to tell *any* young lady who may
" happen to communicate it to her
" again."——

" Alderton---I think your ſiſter the
" lovelieſt creature I ever ſaw."---

" Excellent---and you would like to debauch

debauch her---firſt beginning with her mind, and every thing elſe, you know, follows of courſe.——

" Colonel Alderton does his ſiſter and me an equal injuſtice, when he ſuppoſes it poſſible to attach an idea of impurity to ſuch a conſummate pattern of virtue."——

" Bravely hit off, St. Aubyn—this " may do well enough for the poor, be- " lieving, eaſy brother, or the fond, doat- " ing, ſuperanuated father---but now, " put the brother quite out of the queſ- " tion---forget who I am, and ſuppoſe " me a fellow-rake, on the ſame pur- " ſuits and in the ſame habits together " ---tell me then what would be your " deſigns on Emily Alderton ?"——

I interrupted him—

" Periſh that heart, and may it never " know

" know a moment's reſpite from miſery
" and wretchedneſs, that could harbor
" a licentious wiſh towards ſo lovely an
" ornament to human nature!—Alderton,
" I have a ſiſter, whom I would die to
" protect—but be that as it may, I never
" yet purchaſed a moment's ſatisfaction
" at the expence of injured innocence—
" the beſt of us are occaſionally thought-
" leſs, and gay—but it does not follow,
" that *he* ſhould ever, deliberately, de-
" termine to be criminal.——

" —You are an honeſt fellow, St. Aubyn, and I give you credit, for I believe you *feel* what you ſay ;—when your acquaintance with Emily ripens—you will find her an amiable character, and a girl that no man need be aſhamed to admire."

And

And is it reſerved for me, Stafford, to wear the chains of the divine Emily? ſhall I once more *riſque my happineſs on the fidelity of a woman*,* or boldly ſuppreſs this infant paſſion, before it has the power to rebel, and wound the breaſt that has fondly cheriſhed it?—

All night I lie in impatient anticipation of the welcome morning—morning comes, and I fly to Emily Alderton—ſhe is the guiding ſtar that conducts me to happineſs—we ride, we walk, we converſe together—the Colonel continues his raillery, and proteſts I am in love—we all meet at dinner—the day too ſwiftly glides, and the approach of night brings with it new cauſe for inquietude—I ſigh, and but for the hope of

* See page 2.

ſpeedily meeting, the pangs of abſence would be inſupportable.——

Write to me, Stafford—counſel and direct me as the friend of

Your

SYDNEY ST. AUBYN.

LET-

LETTER XVIII.

To Miss Alderton,

Grafton-Street, Dublin.

Matlock, Wednesday.

MY dear Harriet will think this the moſt welcome letter ſhe has ever received from me, when it opens with a congratulation on the happy recovery of a beloved brother.—Yes, my ſiſter, our amiable *Frank* is once more reſtored, and lives to be ſtill our friend and protector.—The ſalubrious air and the baths of Matlock have done wonders, and you may judge of the ſurprize and joy I felt

on my arrival here, when I found the pale languid countenance he left me with, pleaſingly transformed into a chearful tinge of animated health.—A few weeks longer, and I truſt, with the bleſſing of providence, he will acknowledge the perfect ſovereignty of the roſy goddeſs.

Mrs. Burnaby has been ſingularly happy in ſelecting an amiable partner.—If wedded love were always to preſent ſuch proſpects of felicity—it would indeed be a deſirable ſtate,

"*And marriage be no more the jeſt of fools.*"—

Frank, too, has found a charming friend in a gentleman, whom he accidentally met at Matlock—he is conſtantly

ſtantly of our party, and takes infinite pains to render himſelf agreeable—or rather I mean, he takes no pains at all, for it is impoſſible Mr. St. Aubyn can be otherwiſe than engaging.——

A bold aſſertion this, Harriet, and will carry with it a ſort of whiſper that your Emily's affections are in danger.—

I deſpiſe the poor artifices of diſſimulation—and were I to ſay that I could obſerve with indifference ſuch a happy aſſemblage of amiable qualities in one form, I muſt have ſome motive—unworthy of myſelf.—Genuine merit commands the ready ſuffrage of ſenſibility, and on ſuch an occaſion, conſcious innocence may chearfully ſtand forward to offer it.

I have heretofore, unconcernedly, looked on the many ſuperficial preten-

ders who have ſtrove for an intereſt in my eſteem—they felt their own importance too ſenſibly for *me* to diſcover any other quality than vanity—and tho' a few negative virtues might lurk behind, they were eclipſed by the ſuperior influence of ſelf-conceit—and I had not time to wait for an opportunity to diſcern them.

The reſplendence of St. Aubyn's character, burſting upon me at once, captivated my yielding ſenſes—and I could love the man, were it only for his humble unaffected modeſty, his mild unaſſuming delicacy, and in ſhort for thoſe endearing graces which he ſo evidently poſſeſſes, as the pure inheritance of nature.——

I am only alluding to the accompliſh-

ments

ments of his mind—his perſon deſerves a ſeparate panegyric.

And when I tell you that it is every thing I could wiſh for in a lover, you will conclude that nature has alſo been equally liberal there.

Yet after all, Harriet, he is nothing to me—'tis true his attention is of that ſort which I have never before *felt* from any man—but not a ſyllable has tranſpired that could be interpreted into a declaration of tenderneſs.

Should your Emily happen to pleaſe, and St. Aubyn ſue to her as a lover—if my brother approves it, I know no reaſon why I ought to give him a moment's inquietude, by wantonly affecting a coldneſs which I ſhould be ſorry he thought me capable of feeling.

And

And now my dear, that I am likely to become one of the ſoft tribe of ſighing damſels, depend upon it, I ſhall have ſufficient ſubject for our correſpondence; and that you will not readily have cauſe again to accuſe me of neglecting you.—I ſhall faithfully inform you of all that paſſes.

Our brother knows that I am writing, and he offers you his affectionate love, with that of

your's ſincerely,

EMILY ALDERTON.

Good angel

LET-

LETTER XIX.

To Stafford Sullivan, Esq.

At Bath.

Matlock, Sunday Night.—

WHEN fate ſent me into the world, it ſeems as if ſhe had pre-determined that I ſhould, from time to time, furniſh my kindred ſpecies with remarkable inſtances of the variety of calamities to which human nature is liable. —She meant, poſſibly for ſome miſchiefs of my anceſtry, to ſingle me out a melancholy victim to diſappointment and

and misfortune, and, by way of aggravating my mortification, ſometimes to hold out the cup of joy to my lips---and then to daſh it from me with wanton malignity.

My firſt outſet into life was, I own, marked with the uſual errors of youth and inexperience—gay purſuits I heedleſsly gave into, and diſſipation courted me with faſcinating wiles; but—(I am only ſpeaking it to *you*, Stafford, my faithful friend and confidant) my memory is burthened with no recollection of crimes—nor have I aught to accuſe myſelf with that can ſtain my cheek with a bluſh.——

In the inglorious courſe of giddy intemperance, I have ſometimes waſted my hours in the midnight brothel—I have flown to the meretricious embraces of devoted

devoted beauty—but morning uſhered in the triumphs of reaſon, and I ſtole from this ſcene of my diſgrace, diſguſted and aſhamed.

Innocence never looked at me with a tear-full eye, to ſay that St. Aubyn had betrayed it; nor has poverty or misfortune ever attached my name to oppreſſion.——

Yet I am miſerable—perpetually toſt about in heart-rending uncertainty—the ſport of capricious deſtiny, luckleſs and forlorn.——

Emily Alderton came to Matlock, and won my affections.—I ſurrendered my heart, ſhattered as it had been by a former ſucceſsleſs flame, whilſt the lovely maid, unconſcious of its imperfections, tenderly and fondly accepted it.

Yes, Stafford, ſhe heard the ingenuous

nuous avowal of my love with melting ſenſibility—and proved to me that her ſoul, all purity itſelf, ſuſpected not the integrity of another.

Then happineſs ſpread forth her allurring blandiſhments, and I began to forget all I had ſuffered.

The hours flew away on ſilken wings—and Emily and St. Aubyn lived only for each other—bleſt in the delicious confidence, the happy intercourſe of Love,

When———

Oh, Stafford, you will tremble for your friend, you will judge what *he* muſt feel on beholding in theſe retired ſcenes, (the melancholy ſeat of pale diſeaſe) the elegant, but faded form of Auguſta Conway.——

Yes, my friend, ſhe came, miſſioned by malignant fate, to intercept every

plan

plan I had fondly formed of reſtored happineſs, and recovered tranquility.

Williams was the unwelcome herald of the alarming intelligence.—I was reading in my apartment, and the fellow ſuddenly entered with his countenance agitated and wild.

" Would you believe it, Sir, but as I " hope to be ſaved, Miſs Conway is " come to Matlock?"

Williams makes a little free occaſionally in his harangues to me, but he has a number of excellent qualities that more than counter-balance theſe private imperfections.

I ſtared at him a full minute, obſerving his chagrin, without making any kind of anſwer.——

He reſumed—

" Came in late laſt night, Sir, with " her couſin Miſs Sophia."—

" You are not ſpeaking this from report, or from conjecture, Williams—you certainly are convinced that it is ſo."——

" Unleſs it was a phantom, Sir, within this half hour, I ſpoke to her own maid Elizabeth—ſhe tells me her young lady is very poorly, and has been near a fortnight on the road—they are come for the benefit of the baths, and are at preſent at the ——— Inn on the hill.——

Had this happened a week ſooner, how different would have been my ſenſations?

If I determined to ſhun Auguſta Conway, it muſt be becauſe I dared not truſt my rebel heart in the power of her ſtill

remem-

remembered charms, leſt its infirmity ſhould betray me.

If I thought raſhly to ruſh into her preſence, and pretend that my hour of triumph was come, ſhe would deteſt the mimicry of my heroiſm, and puniſh my temerity accordingly.

Emily Alderton would hear of it—and find that what ſhe had received as a pure offering of unſullied affection, was nothing more than the ſtale remnant of a diſcarded heart, that ſtill clung to its unworthy attachment.

Her exalted ſoul would take the alarm, and deſpiſe me, not only for the fraud I had been deliberately carrying on, but for the weakneſs I had afterwards been mean enough to ſubmit to.——

Thus am I afreſh in the power of Auguſta Conway—and whilſt Emily is

for

for ever loſt to me, the former has the power of reaſſuming her empire of tyranny.

Reflections of this kind tortured my mind, whilſt I liſtened to the momentary whiſper of reaſon.—

And my foreboding heart, anticipating ſome dire diſaſter, ſunk, dejected, in my boſom.

I went to Emily Alderton—the dear girl in an inſtant diſcovered my diſcompoſure—" I was cold, abſent, in-" attentive—had ſhe done any thing to " diſpleaſe me."——

At firſt I tried the hacknied apology of indiſpoſition—a violent head-ache—but ſhe was not to be ſatisfied with ſo ſhallow a pretence—ſhe ſuſpected ſomething more ſerious had affected me—I looked earneſtly at her, and gave vent

to

to an involuntary ſigh—ſhe ſurprized and detected me in the fact.——

" Mr. St. Aubyn has ſome motive for wiſhing to conceal from me the cauſe of his uneaſineſs.—I am a novice in love, but I own I thought it eſtabliſhed between two hearts ſincerely attached to each other—I am deceived it ſeems—but I ſuppoſe Mr. St. Aubyn thinks it expedient I ſhould ſo ſoon be convinced of my error."——

This gentle rebuke was accompanied by a tear—which ſtarted into the lovely girl's eye, and ſtood there a gliſtening monument of wounded ſenſibility.

The Colonel was not preſent—he had ſet off early in the morning on a favorite romantic plan of exploring ſome of the natural curioſities of the country—I had heretofore been accuſtomed to accompany

pany him, but *my* favorite purſuits were now otherwiſe directed.——

By the time the Colonel returned it was late in the evening, and I had contrived to huſh Emily's anxiety, by aſſuring her, that a little domeſtic incident, rather of an unpleaſant nature, and prematurely communicated, had a good deal chagrined me—but it was over, and I ſhould think no more of it.

In full poſſeſſion of the charming virgin's affections, I ought to have felt myſelf ſupremely bleſt—for had it been prophetically told me, on my firſt interview with her, that the day would ſo ſpeedily arrive when I ſhould find myſelf beloved by her, I would have ſmiled at the vain idea—and held it as nothing more than a wanton deriſion of fortune.

We

We exchanged our uſual affectionate adieus, and I retired to reſt.

Williams was in waiting, and having attended me to my chamber—he pulled out a letter.——

" This was given me, Sir, about an hour ſince by Miſs Conway's maid."—

I broke it open—

" Miſs Conway has juſt heard of Mr. " St. Aubyn's being at Matlock, and " takes the liberty of requeſting him to " favor her with a call in the morn- " ing."

" Saturday afternoon."

This was putting my fortitude and my gallantry at once to the teſt—to have declined the interview would have been highly injudicious, ſince it was not for *me* to conjecture for what purpoſe ſhe

had ſolicited it, and to ſee her was a *riſque* that threatened the moſt alarming conſequences.

I paſſed the night, reſtleſs, divided and undetermined—but by the morning had reſolved, in ſpite of the danger, to venture into her preſence, and, if poſſible, ſee her with indifference.

The intermediate hours ſeemed ſometimes to linger, and, at others, to fly—I dreaded—yet I longed for the important moment that was to prove my fortitude, and which comprehended the criſis of my fate.

If I retired triumphant from the field, Emily Alderton was ready with the laurels that were to crown my conqueſt—and ſhe had alſo ready the treaſure that was to conſtitute my happineſs.—

Fluſhed with expected, and almoſt undoubted

undoubted ſucceſs, I cloſed my reckoning here, and at twelve o'clock repaired to the ſpot where Auguſta Conway had herſelf invited me.

Her maid Elizabeth very courteouſly addreſſed me, and with a ſignificant look, hinted that her young lady was poorly, but would be glad to receive me.—

Every limb trembled as ſhe conducted me forwards, and when, on opening the door of her apartment, ſhe juſt announced my name, and inſtantly uſhered me in—I *felt* the danger I was ruſhing into, and found my feeble reſolution inſtantaneouſly giving way.

There ſat the pale but ſtill lovely fair one—conſciouſly maintaining her uſuſal empire of elegance and grace—her couſin Sophia was by her ſide.

Miſs

Miſs Conway aroſe, and having directed a chair, with one of thoſe fatal ſmiles which heretofore had undone me, begged me to be ſeated.

Her couſin remained.

After exchanging a few introductory words, Miſs Conway addreſſed me.—She was aſtoniſhingly calm and collected.

" Mr. St. Aubyn, I preſume, had a very unexpected billet yeſterday—I certainly was a good deal ſurpriſed to hear of your being at Matlock, altho' I ſaw no ſort of occaſion to conſider it a matter of any conſequence.—You are, Sir, undoubtedly at liberty to be where you pleaſe, and I dare ſay are equally diſpoſed to allow others the ſame privilege—that point ſettled—we meet of courſe as old acquaintances."——

" You

" You have, I ſuppoſe, heard from your friend Sullivan what has lately happened in Devonſhire, and poſſibly may conclude, that I who have been ſo long pronounced cruel and unfeeling, have *juſtly* met my day of retribution—and the alteration in my looks may bear teſtimony that I have *felt* myſelf humbled even in my own opinion."——

I was about to ſpeak—

" Excuſe me, Mr. St. Aubyn—I have not yet done—I know what you would ſay—but remember, I am not making any *appeal* on this occaſion—my conduct needs no juſtification in regard to Mr. Douglas—I certainly thought him what he appeared to be, and that I was deceived muſt be more a ſource of ſatisfaction to me, than otherwiſe.—I have now done with your ſex—indeed I may

not

not live to attract any one's notice again—and therefore what I ſay may ſeem to ariſe from a certain private conſciouſneſs that my career of conqueſt is cloſed—be that as it may, you have a liberality in your nature which I always admired, and my motive for ſending to you was chiefly to aſſure you that I have diſcovered ſome honorable *traits* in your character, which the eye of prejudice had hitherto looked on as vices, and they were of that deſcription that no woman of honor or prudence ought to countenance, much leſs ſeek occaſion to palliate.—Douglas, I underſtand, is the father of my little favorite, the cottage orphan—of courſe he is, or has been known to you before.—My firſt queſtion is, how long is it ſince, and where did you know him?"

— "Before

—" Before I anſwer, Miſs Conway will forgive my preſuming to aſk why ſhe thought it neceſſary to premiſe that ſhe had done with our ſex.—St. Aubyn, alas, has had too much reaſon to be convinced, that ſhe has long ſince done with *him*, and yet if ſhe meant to convey a ſentiment of pity for the pangs of diſappointed love—I feel that I ought to be thankful for the beneficent intention."—

" Mr. St. Aubyn may judge what I would ſay, when I frankly declare to him that I acted from prejudice—that I was deceived, and that I regret it."——

Oh Stafford, I looked at her whilſt ſhe ſpoke—her eyes met mine, and betrayed a delicious confuſion—at the moment my heart was alive to every fond, every endearing remembrance.—I fancied her boſom felt a conflict between

pride and ſenſibility—if the latter were to triumph, thought I, St. Aubyn is overcome.——

But if ſhe had been inadvertently betrayed into a little diſorder, her moment for rallying was near——ſhe preſently aſſumed a firmneſs of tone, and demanded if I meant to honor her with an anſwer.——I bowed——

" Mr. Douglas I became acquainted " with between two and three years " ſince, at the houſe of a navy-agent in " London, who I am perſuaded would " not have admitted any but reſpectable " characters to his table—but it was by " no means unlikely that Douglas might " contrive to impoſe upon *him* as well " as others.—I own I liked the man, " and his advances of friendſhip were " not unwelcome to me—his addreſs was

" inſinuat-

" inſinuating—his manners engaging,
" and we agreed to take a day or two's
" fiſhing together at the Otterſpool in
" Hertfordſhire—our acquaintance grew
" in this manner, and was cultivated ac-
" cordingly.—

" The firſt circumſtance that im-
" preſſed my mind with a ſuſpicion un-
" favourable to him, was his producing
" a letter ſigned *Maria Rivers*, upbraid-
" ing him in mild, but very affecting
" language, with having betrayed and
" deſerted her—marked amongſt the
" fatal number of unhappy victims to
" credulity—this unfortunate girl plead-
" ed the violence of unabated love, and
" conjured him to conſider, that within
" a few weeks the innocent little pledge
" of their guilty intercourſe would ſee
" the light.—Douglas, I could eaſily un-

 " derſtand

" derſtand, expoſed this letter more as
" a trophy of triumph in the field of
" gallantry, than from any humane wiſh
" to conſult with me on the occaſion—
" had he done ſo, I ſhould not have he-
" ſitated a moment to inſiſt on his flying
" to ſuccour the defenceleſs fair one—
" but he wandered from the point, and
" I could not poſſibly bring him to it
" again—this lowered him in my opi-
" nion—and ſome little time after-
" wards, when my happier days were de-
" voted to love and to Miſs Conway
" (and I was in Devonſhire) accident
" brought the poor wanderer, who had
" forſaken her father's humble dwelling
" (aſhamed to meet the moment that
" would expoſe, as well as eſtabliſh, her
" guilt and ſhame) to Mrs. Clements's
" cottage—the worthy widow tenderly

" and

" and hoſpitably ſheltered her—there,
" in the courſe of my occaſional ram-
" bles I found her—ſhe told her ſtory,
" artleſs and ſincere—and I ſoon diſco-
" vered, that the unhappy ſufferer be-
" fore me was the wretched victim to
" Douglas's perfidy.—The ungrateful
" wretch had himſelf been indebted to
" the hoſpitable roof of her injured ſire,
" and in return had baſely meditated
" and accompliſhed the deſtruction of
" his daughter.—My heart immediately
" became her advocate, and I deſired
" Mrs. Clements to beſtow every poſ-
" ſible attention to her—unfortunate
" girl, ſhe lived but a few days after the
" birth of her infant—and when death
" had almoſt cloſed the period of her
" ſufferings, I came in juſt in time to
" receive from her the beautiful or-

" phan—I ſwore to protect it, and ſhe
" died contented.——

" After her deceaſe, I made ſome en-
" quiries about Douglas, and wrote to
" him on the ſubject, but never received
" any anſwer, or indeed knew what pur-
" ſuits he was engaged in, until my
" friend Sullivan diſcovered him in the
" aſſumed character of Colonel Alder-
" ton.——

" The promiſe I made the expiring
" ſufferer, I mean moſt religiouſly to
" obſerve—nor is it a circumſtance that
" I can do otherwiſe than rejoice at, to
" find that Miſs Conway is alſo its pro-
" tectreſs—whom *ſhe* deigns to foſter
" muſt be bleſt indeed."——

" — I paſs over your compliments,
" Mr. St. Aubyn, as unneceſſary to be
" noticed, whilſt we are at preſent ſo

" ſeriouſly

" ſeriouſly engaged—my heart has ſilent-
" ly yielded you its approbation for your
" conduct towards the orphan and its
" departed mother—and nothing further
" need be ſaid on that ſubject.

" — But in regard to yourſelf, as you
" have thought proper to retrace cir-
" cumſtances and events which had bet-
" ter have been forgotten, I will at leaſt
" act with candor on the occaſion, and
" thereby ſecure myſelf a ſhelter from
" any reproaches you may hereafter
" bring againſt me.—If my friendſhip
" is worthy your acceptance, take it.—
" I aſſure you my offer is founded on
" an admiration of your virtues, and
" perhaps I ſhould add, a conviction
" that I have not been altogether as *juſt*
" as I ought.—Reflect, St. Aubyn, on
" the circumſtances under which I am

" now

" now addreſſing you—ſee me under the
" arbitrary dominion of diſeaſe, languid
" and enervated—and you will, I dare
" ſay, find more reaſon to approve what
" I ſay than to condemn.

" And whilſt I enjoy, for a moment,
" the ſelf-aſſumed privileges of that
" friendſhip I am offering you, permit
" me to expreſs my concern, that a cha-
" racter ſo deſerving as Mr. St. Aubyn,
" ſhall not in all this time have made a
" happier, or if he pleaſes, a more for-
" tunate choice—every woman is not an
" Auguſta Conway,—nor are there many
" St. Aubyns—be adviſed, Sir, and try
" this as the moſt likely means of ef-
" fecting a perfect cure for former diſ-
" appointments.

" I don't know whether you were ever

" informed

" informed of it or not, but ſome years
" ſince the ſame complaint that my
' friends are now ſo alarmed about,
" viſited me very ſeriouſly—but I reco-
" vered on this very ſpot, and at ſuch
" a diſtance of time had no apprehenſion
" of a relapſe—it ſeems, however, the
" phyſicians have pronounced me in
" danger, and let my fate be what it
" may, I am reconciled and reſigned.

" But ſhould it pleaſe Heaven to
" ſpare me, I have guarded againſt the
" poſſibility of ever being yours, Mr.
" St. Aubyn, by a vow I have ſolemnly
" made, and which nothing can ever
" perſuade me to violate—this of itſelf
" would be ſufficient to warn you againſt
" indulging any deluſive hopes—but,
" ſetting aſide every other conſideration
" — ſuppoſe me releaſed from my vow,

" or

" or that I had never made it—ſuppoſe
" me reſtored to the full poſſeſſion of
" health and ſpirits, and even inclined
" to reward the fidelity you have ſo long
" nouriſhed this unfortunate paſſion with,
" think you, St. Aubyn, that the ſoul
" of Auguſta Conway could condeſcend
" now to accept from your generoſity,
" what ſhe heretofore refuſed from your
" love—do you judge ſo unworthily of
" me as to ſuppoſe, that after I had once
" acted indiſcreetly, I would put it into
" your power to think I availed myſelf
" of your affection, as a laſt reſource,
" degraded, humbled, and diſappointed?
" — No, Sir, Douglas may have de-
" ceived, but he had not the power to
" reconcile me to ſo mortifying a leſ-
" ſon."——

" —Were an event ſo flattering to

the

the intereſts of humanity as Miſs Conway's reſtoration, to take place, and were the vow (which might appear to have been raſhly made) once diſpenſed with, I truſt ſhe knows enough of St. Aubyn's nature to be ſatisfied that ſhe could make no condeſcenſion in his opinion unworthy herſelf, or that he ſhould not be honored by.—Our intereſts, Miſs Conway, would then be one and indiviſible—and could it be poſſible for *me* to ſeek to diſunite it?—Oh that the moments were come when I had only this to encounter, when no more important difficulty ſtood between me and felicity.—I would truſt to the eloquence of honeſt love to urge my pretenſions, and Auguſta Conway would not hear them with indifference—ſay then, amiable

girl,

girl, that you permit me to retain your friendſhip as a kind of hoſtage for future love, and I will receive it with honorable gratitude.—Forgive me, Miſs Conway, I am not at this moment inſenſible to the value of a friendſhip like your's, but with ſuch contingencies permit me to ſay, it is all my humbled heart at preſent dare aſpire to."—

" ——Mr. St. Aubyn muſt recollect what I have already ſaid on this ſubject—and if he ſuppoſes me incapable of trifling, he will allow any further explanation from me unneceſſary."—She aroſe —" This houſe ſhall always be open to Mr. St. Aubyn as my friend—come tomorrow—or when you pleaſe—I feel myſelf at preſent rather exhauſted, and you will excuſe me."—She held out her hand—I preſſed it to my lips—ſhe dealt another

another faſcinating ſmile, and leaning on her couſin, retired to an interior apartment.——

Now, Stafford, what a wretch am I—and what a flagrant profanation was I guilty of thro' the whole of this interview—forget not to brand me as the moſt perfidious of men, for I deſerve it—ſcarce twelve hours had elapſed, ſince in the preſence of the divine Emily Alderton, I ſwore everlaſting love—nay further, I was mean enough to have recourſe to diſſimulation with *her*, whom I ought, by every tie of honor, to have watched over with a ſacred ſincerity.——

Tell me what I am, Stafford, that when Auguſta Conway, herſelf, conjured me to forget her, and try to kindle a new flame on the ruins of the old

one, I did not eagerly and honorably compound, and fly the fatal phantom that reaſon is perpetually telling me, will inevitably lure me to deſtruction.——

Tell me that I ought to have been ſatisfied with the impoſſibility of ever ſurmounting the difficulties that ſtood before me, and gratefully have welcomed Auguſta Conway's offer of friendſhip.——

Hear my feeble juſtification, but heed it nòt—'tis the ſophiſtry of a guilty mind—for with *me* to be weak and wavering is to be criminal.

I may attempt to plead, that I looked on her and was loſt—that the melting languor which hung over her lovely eyes—the reſerved accents which faultered on her tongue—the tinge which

ſuffuſed her charming countenance—all conſpired to perſuade me, that ſhe doubted whilſt ſhe ſpoke, and was irreſolute, whilſt ſhe wiſhed me to believe her firm and determined.—

I know my guilt, Stafford—and will not ſeek to diminiſh it by calling it error or weakneſs.

And that a ſenſe of it prevails in my diſtracted mind, you will believe, when I tell you, that I have not ventured into the preſence of Emily Alderton ſince the fatal interview with Auguſta—'tis now midnight—I left Miſs Conway about two this afternoon, and have been lurking up and down in convenient hiding places, to eſcape the dreaded reproaches of the injured fair one.—Yet what will theſe pitiful tricks avail me?

—I muſt ſee her, and ſhe muſt be ſatisfied that I am a villain.——

Adieu——

I ſhall write again to-morrow.

SYDNEY ST. AUBYN.

LET-

LETTER XX.

To Miss Louisa Wentworth.

Matlock, Tuesday.

I HASTEN to relieve the anxiety of affectionate friendship, by taking up my pen, the first I have held for many days, to announce to my beloved Louisa, tidings which I know she will receive with pleasure.—I am a good deal better, my dear, altho' since I left the Moat-house I have been very ill, and several times fainted on the road—to these salubrious hills, Louisa knows I owe a former escape from the ghastly king of terrors, and I think there is a magical

charm hangs over them, that I am particularly affected by, for ſince my arrival here, I have ſelt myſelf gaining ſtrength and ſpirits daily.

I have a deal to ſay, Louiſa, but dare not make too free in this firſt attempt—let it ſuffice, therefore, if I tell you, to judge of my aſtoniſhment at finding St. Aubyn here—and you will, perhaps, be ſurpriſed, when you hear that Auguſta condeſcended to diſpatch a card to him, ſoliciting an interview—he came, true to the appointed hour, and acquitted himſelf with his uſual elegance and grace—though ſtill the forlorn, ſighing lover.—I offered him my friendſhip, Louiſa, for I felt that I had uſed him ill—and but for the vow which I haſtily made, in a petulant fit of anger and mortification,

I might

I might go a little farther—and take it into conſideration one day to reward his long and faithful attachment.

Earneſtly as my Louiſa has pleaded for her favorite, St. Aubyn, I am aware ſhe will feel ſome little feminine jealouſies, for the honor of her Auguſta, fearing ſhe ſhould ſuffer in St. Aubyn's opinion by this condeſcenſion, after the ugly affair in Devonſhire—but, my dear, I interrogated him very cloſely (altho' with an appearance of artleſs, unmeaning ſimplicity) as to that point, and he ſaid, or rather would have ſaid, ſufficient to ſatisfy me—not that I mean tamely to ſurrender after all—it ſhall coſt him juſt ſix months ſighs and complainings, comprehending the uſual allowance of doubt and uncertainty—then poſſibly I may deign to become Mrs. St. Aubyn

with

with a tolerable degree of compoſure.——

The man, Louiſa, has many illuſtrious qualities, not to be deſcribed or conſidered as merely amiable—they are of more importance, and ought to be eſteemed as ſuch—nor can a heart like St. Aubyn's be unworthy a better than Auguſta's.——

—I believe I ſhall drop ſome of my romantic, high-flown notions, and think of domeſticating myſelf a little amongſt the ſons and daughters of poor human nature—I muſt break off—but will reſume it in the afternoon.

* * * * * *

In Continuation.

(By her couſin Miſs Butler).

Sophia takes the pen, my dear, for I am too much agitated to write.

Have

Have no alarm about my health, Auguſta—I am not worſe in that reſpect.

What an artful deſigning wretch is this St. Aubyn?

I have not patience to explain myſelf.

At the moment when, like another knight of the woeful countenance, he ventured into my preſence, trembling with confuſion, his brow overſpread with a modeſt, mild complacency, artfully endeavouring to exact from me an engagement that amounted to a pledge of my affections, do you know, my dear, that he was abſolutely betrothed to another?

And your friend Auguſta was to have been the mortified dupe to her credulity.——

Oh yes, Mr. St. Aubyn—undoubtedly you ſhall retaliate this way, and take your

your own revenge on Auguſta Conway!

A mighty generous return this, for the candor and ſincerity I ſuffered myſelf to receive him with.——

Hoſpitality is groſsly inſulted by ſuch an unmanly treſpaſs—for when I offered him my friendſhip, I told him that this roof would ever receive him with a cordial welcome—and the wretch, I remember, faultered out a few imperfect accents that were I conceived dictated by gratitude.

The real Colonel Alderton, it ſeems, *happens* to be at preſent at Matlock, and the intimate aſſociate of Mr. St. Aubyn—undoubtedly *confidants* in this glorious ſcheme to trepan me.——

And this Colonel Alderton it ſeems has a ſiſter, of whom report ſpeaks as an

an elegant accompliſhed creature—*ſhe* is the happy lady.

I am ſorry for her—but St. Aubyn ſhall never have it in his power to think he could dare, with impunity, to trifle with Auguſta Conway.

He has abſolutely deſcended into the commiſſion of a mean falſehood, to gloſs over his artful hypocriſy—for whilſt I ingenuouſly acknowledged the impulſe of that friendſhip I proffered him, (and which I declared was founded on a conviction of his ſuperior merits) I regretted that he could not, from the gay circles of faſhion and beauty, ſelect ſome deſerving fair one, who by returning his affection, might eſtabliſh the means of forgetting his former unſucceſsful attachment.

But, no—if I would give him

my

my friendſhip as a hoſtage for love, he would gratefully receive and preſerve it.——

—Yet but an hour before he had been at the feet of this melting damſel—this enchanting Miſs Alderton, ſighing out his paſſion, and doubtleſs confirming the ſincerity of it with a profuſion of oaths.

And I dare ſay, from me he flew to her again, and wantonly reported the progreſs of his plot—nor were my pale and languid looks forgotten—a moſt glorious ſubject of humiliation to the haughty beauty that was Auguſta Conway.

* * * * * *

(Continued by Miſs Conway—in her own hand-writing.)

Forgive

Forgive me, Louiſa, and ſuffer me to do as I pleaſe—our *ſex* is inſulted by this baſe deſign, and it becomes a common cauſe—I have miſchief in my head—you ſhall hear in a day or two how it works—for the preſent, Adieu.——

AUGUSTA CONWAY.

LETTER XXI.

To Stafford Sullivan, Esq.

Matlock, Thurſday.

I BELIEVE you was never at Matlock, and therefore can form no idea of the romantic and pictureſque ſcenes which this part of the country preſents to the delighted traveller—the variety of woods which ſkirt the ſloping hills, afford a pleaſing, welcome ſhelter from the noon-tide heat; and if the heart is under the dominion of a certain little tyrant, and ſighs for ſolitude, this is the place

place to indulge its melancholy in, and here the languiſhing ſwain may explore receſſes almoſt impenetrable, and undiſturbed conſume his lingering hours.

The morning after I wrote to you, I ſent in my name to Miſs Alderton, and without meaning to take any notice of my truant neglect the day before, I ſolicited her to accompany me in a walk before dinner—her anſwer was, that indiſpoſition would, *ſhe feared*, confine her to her chamber 'till the evening, but if ſhe was then better, ſhe would attend me *with pleaſure*.

Evening came, and I ſaw her not—anxious and impatient, I ſent for her maid, and ſhe informed me that her young lady was worſe, and incapable of leaving her apartment.

This diſappointment a good deal diſ-

concerted me, as I meant unreſervedly to have made Miſs Alderton acquainted with the hiſtory of my former attachment, and to have brought down circumſtances and events to the preſent moment—this explanation was immediately neceſſary, as well for the ſake of the dear girl, as for the ſupport of my own honor.

Nor did I doubt, but when ſhe once underſtood my ſituation as it really was, I might, with the happieſt confidence truſt every thing to her generoſity.

Muſing and melancholy, I betook myſelf into a favorite part of the wood, where I had been accuſtomed to ramble with the lovely Emily, the remembrance of which had ever ſince particularly endeared it to me.

Loſt in a profound reverie, I was ſud-

ſuddenly diſturbed by a ruſtling amongſt the trees—I liſtened—all was ſilent, and I continued my walk 'till in a few ſeconds the ſame kind of noiſe ſtartled me again—I turned about, and at a little diſtance from a tree I had juſt before paſſed, I obſerved a folded paper fluttering in the air, ſuſpended from a bough with a narrow black ribband, and diſpoſed almoſt in the center of the track, ſo that it was impoſſible to paſs and not notice it.—Silent and ſequeſtered, this ſeemed a ſpot peculiarly calculated for romantic adventures, and I concluded I ſhould preſently be engaged in ſomething of that nature—yielding in curioſity, and ſuppoſing myſelf unobſerved, I approached the paper, and finding it within my reach, drew it towards me—it was addreſſed

" *To him whom it may concern.*"

It had been curiouſly folded at the corners, and was rather difficult to open —in the inſide was inſcribed as follows.

" If deſtiny's records are true,
" I find by prophetical art,
" *St. Aubyn* yet lives to ſubdue
" *Auguſta*'s inflexible heart.

" Thou haſt heard how the ſybils of old
" Enlightened a wondering land—
" Then liſt whilſt a truth *I* unfold—
" THY MOMENT FOR TRIUMPH'S AT HAND."

MERLIN.

From the Black Rock, in the Wood.

That

That this whimſical prediction was intended for, and concerned *me*, there could be no doubt whatever.—I ſmiled at the oddity of the conceit, and looking about to ſee if any one witneſſed the effect of my curioſity, I put it into my pocket.—Not a trace of human footſteps could be ſeen, yet it required no extraordinary diſcernment to diſcover, that I was not indebted to an aerial agent for this gracious billet, ſince it bore the teſtimony of mortal hands, and mortal hands had undoubtedly been very recently engaged in it.——

When I fancied myſelf at ſome diſtance from the ſcene of action, I ſat down on the ſtump of a tree, and reviewed the paper.—You, Stafford, are leſs ſuperſtitious than me, and on many occaſions have ridiculed my notions of

dreams and forebodings—but I defy you, with all your ſubtlety of reaſoning, to account for this extraordinary incident.—Who could know of St. Aubyn and Auguſta's intercourſe?—who could preſume to think that ſuch a circumſtance, as is predicted, could be within the compaſs of poſſibility?—*I* might have ſome ſecret reaſon to believe it not unlikely,—but excepting yours, my own boſom has been ever the faithful repoſitory of private ſentiment, and it could not be the reſult of ſuperficial obſervation, ſince it touched ſo nearly on an event intereſting, as well as probable.—I ſat ſome time deliberating, and perplexed with various conjectures, and finding myſelf more and more bewildered, put up the paper, and retraced the ſame path back again, with an intent to examine the

magical

magical tree; but having made no particular mark to diſtinguiſh it by, I could not, with the utmoſt nicety of inſpection, find it out, and was contented to give up the purſuit, and proceed home.——

It was almoſt dark when I reached my apartment—on my table I found the following card encloſed in a cover.——

" Colonel Alderton preſents his com-
" pliments to Mr. St. Aubyn, and if he
" can ſpare half an hour after breakfaſt
" to-morrow, Colonel A. will be glad to
" have the honor of an interview with
" him.

" Wedneſday Evening."

This formal mode of addreſſing me, ſo unlike what had ever yet paſſed between the Colonel and me, left me no kind of doubt as to the object of the in-

terview

terview—indeed I fancied the Colonel had of late rather abated in that generous warmth of friendſhip with which he had been accuſtomed to ſalute me.—I own I felt ſomething like a conſciouſneſs of the cauſe, but the tenaciouſneſs of honor, and the partiality we feel towards ourſelves on occaſions of this nature, made me reſolve to appear indifferent.—Whatever had paſſed between Miſs Conway and me, it was not likely could have been known to the Colonel or his ſiſter, and neither of them had any right, I thought, to form concluſions injurious to my integrity, without being warranted by facts, and not merely from the effect of premature ſuſpicions.

It happened very aukwardly that I was in the morning ſeverely affected by that nervous head-ache of which you have heard

heard me complain, and the day on which it attacked me, you know I generally devote to my chamber, where only, by reſt and quiet, I can hope to get the better of it.

I thought this time the pain unuſually exquiſite, and ſuppoſing it unlikely to diſcontinue, I made no ſort of difficulty in diſpatching *Williams* to the Colonel with my compliments, and to acquaint him that I was confined to my chamber, indiſpoſed, but if I was better in the afternoon, I would certainly not fail attending him as he deſired.

And towards the evening I grew better.

I was no ſooner dreſſed than I ſent in another meſſage to the Colonel, importing that I was a good deal better, and entirely at his ſervice.

His anſwer was, that he ſhould expect me in an hour.——

I was with him in leſs than the time—but the poſt is waiting for my letter, and you muſt ſuſpend your curioſity till I can write again.

Ever your's,

SYDNEY ST. AUBYN.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

To Mr. Nugent,

At the Marlbro' Coffee-Houſe,
London.

Tewkſbury, Friday.—

I AM ſatisfied with your letter, Nugent, and am willing to believe you ſincere—indeed, I had previous intelligence of your having deſerted the needy tribe, and therefore am convinced, that ſo far you have acted with diſcretion.—Our ſentiments are ſimilar, and like myſelf, you know when you do wrong, altho' you ſeem for a moment to wiſh to

reconcile it to neceſſity—continue to think me your friend, and I ſhall readily cloſe with your offer of becoming my correſpondent.

An adventurer in life, friendleſs and unknown, I muſt neceſſarily wade thro' many chequered ſcenes, and have many opportunities of obſerving the manners and diſpoſitions of mankind—perhaps, however, one day or other, when fortune finds ſome little remnants of integrity hanging about my heart—ſhe may deign to take me into favor.

I left Bath, not abſolutely diſgraced, but in very great danger—one of Miſs Conway's friends, and an agent from *my* evil genius, intercepted me *there*, and I thought it prudent to retreat without any ceremonious explanation.—Money I had none, and the means of travelling

I could only defray, by drawing on my ſcanty wardrobe—I could but ill ſpare it, but I had better do *that* than worſe.

Well—to Tewkſbury I directed my ſteps—and on my arrival happened to quarter myſelf at an inn, reſorted to by a certain deſcription of country itinerants, yclept players.

They liked my company, for I ſung, and related a number of anecdotes, chiefly theatrical, which pleaſed them mightily.

Nay, as the chearful glaſs was briſkly circulating round, I ventured to diſplay my talents at recitation;—I ſpoke prologues, and ſelect ſpeeches from Shakeſpear, which were received with unanimous plaudits, and brought me many hearty and flattering compliments.

At laſt, the manager, who was no otherwiſe to be diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the company, than by an occaſional conſequence which he was obliged to aſſume, and perhaps I might ſay, by one ſad ſhade removed in the colour of his envied ſhirt, ſeated himſelf by me, and familiarly aſked "if I had ever turned my thoughts to the ſtage.—My figure," he obſerved, "would be a good recommendation at firſt, and I ſeemed to have ſome decent powers of expreſſion—were I ſo inclined, he would readily give me a trial, and if I preferred one character to another, I might mention it, and the play ſhould ſoon be got up."——

It inſtantly occurred to me, that this was an opportunity that I might avail myſelf of, rather than truſt to uncertainty—beſides, tho' my outſet were ever

ever ſo humble, it would not hinder my advancement, ſhould I appear hereafter to poſſeſs abilities for the profeſſion.

I told the manager "that I was not altogether prepared to anſwer him, but that if he would give me leave, I would conſider of it—and he ſhould know my determination in the morning."

He inſiſted on defraying the expences of the evening, and it was not very likely that I ſhould ſeriouſly oppoſe ſo convenient an offer.——

In the morning, I had ſcarcely finiſhed my breakfaſt, when he ſent in his name, (Mr. B———) and I gave orders for him to be admitted.

By his obſequiouſneſs and complacency, any one would have concluded *me* to have been the manager, and *him* the ſtage-ſtruck hero, ſuing for a trial.

It is not neceſſary to inform you preciſely of all that paſſed at this curious interview—let it ſuffice that he interlarded his language with a good deal of compliments, and, in fine, candidly acknowledged I ſhould be a valuable acquiſition to his company.

I muſt explain to you the terms, in order that you may judge of the flattering temptation held out to me.——

The advantages which this company derived from their labors in the *public ſervice*, aroſe from a certain proportion of the profits of each night—this is called playing on ſhares—the manager very modeſtly appropriates five of theſe ſhares or proportions to himſelf, and having a wife, (whether uſeful or otherwiſe, matters not,) who occaſionally contributes her aſſiſtance to the compa-

ny.

ny, he fixes the ſtandard of her abilities at the ſame rate—beſides which they have a daughter about ſeven years old, trained to theatrical purſuits, who ſometimes ſings and repreſents characters within her reach—for this *ſcion* of dramatic genius he allots two ſhares more, making his proportion juſt twelve ſhares—the reſt is divided amongſt the company—and as the number of performers is generally from ten to twelve, and they look upon five or ſix pounds as a very good houſe—you may judge of the proportion due to each individual performer.——

Theſe were the conditions on which I conſented to enroll my name (tho' by the bye I judged it adviſeable to change it to *Manley*)—amongſt the candidates for public favor.

The

The play I fixed upon to make my entré in, was "Oronooko"—and on the awful day appointed, it was announced with all the honors of a country play-bill—beſides other embelliſhments, it ſet forth "*how* this tragedy was a parti-"cular favorite on the London ſtage, "and drew crouded audiences—repre-"ſenting a royal black prince in chains, "and *how* his fair Imoinda, from whom "he was ſeparated when taken priſoner, "afterwards came into the country where "he was captive, and *how* ſhe there met "with her long-loſt lord—and at laſt *how* "they died for each other, &c. &c."—

At the accuſtomed hour we repaired to the ſcene of action—this was a barn, let out for the purpoſe by an honeſt farmer, and ſituated about half a mile from the town—it might hold ſixty perſons,

and

and our higheſt price was two ſhillings for ſeats, which occupied about one third of the houſe—the other places might be viſited for one ſhilling.——

Here, however, no malignant rage for criticiſm prevails—our humble pit teems with no news-paper editors aſſembled together in ſolemn council, to mark and report the young gentleman's pretenſions to fame.—Curioſity ſleeps at this lingering diſtance—and if the play-bill had announced the whole company as new performers, I don't know that it would have drawn a ſingle auditor.

At half paſt ſix, we counted twenty-five in the houſe—and our band, which conſiſted of an infirm reduced performer, who had been unfortunate enough to loſe an eye in a conteſt with a Corniſh miner, and a deformed youth that honored him with

with the appellation of father, made their appearance before the curtain—the former was a fidler, and reckoned of eminence in his way—the latter held a tabor and pipe.——

The manager had been liberal enough in regard to my dreſs—he had furniſhed me with a ſplendid robe, decorated with tinſel and ermine—and every thing elſe correſponded decently—the lower parts of my accoutrements, ſuch as hoſe, ſhoes, &c. I was informed I muſt provide myſelf with, and in that reſpect I was pretty well off—tho' neceſſity had impaired ſome parts of my apparel—ſhe had not extended her devaſtations ſo far.——

The ſecond muſic finiſhed, the curtain, which had waved rather ungracefully from the attack of ſome *rude* breezes that obtruded, in ſpite of all precaution,

thro'

thro' the broken canvas—drew up—our ſcenery was conſtructed on the ancient Greek model—Unique.—We had pillars on each ſide of the ſtage, ſcanty ſubſtitutes for wings, and our back ground diſplayed the perſpective of a ruin, —preſently, Oronooko was led forth in chains—my figure was rather ſtriking, and I was welcomed with plaudits—this encouraged me, and I went thro' my part tolerably well—but owing to the abſence of one of our company, who was reported to be in a ſtate of ebriety at a neighbouring ale-houſe, we were under the neceſſity of making free with *the whole* of the third act, and dividing the laſt into two—this was reckoned a harmleſs ſtratagem, and had often been ſucceſsfully practiſed.—The play was concluded, and Oronooko retired with diſtinguiſhed

diſtinguiſhed applauſe.—Our after piece was "*High Life below Stairs*," and I dare ſay might have gone off with equal ſucceſs, but it grew late, and having a great way to go, our incurious audience, ſatiated with their entertainment, gradually forſook us, and at the commencement of the ſecond act it was diſcovered, that excepting a ſleeping ruſtic, nothing but empty benches were left to witneſs the diſplay of our *comic* talents.—I ſay *our*, altho' I had nothing to do with this part of the performance—a council was immediately called, and we determined to cloſe for the evening.

The buſineſs over, our treaſurer appeared and produced his accounts—and the reward for my evening's exertions amounted to—one ſhilling and three halfpence—this I put into my pocket, and

and accepted the manager's invitation to ſpend an hour with him at the inn.—

He expreſſed himſelf very well ſatisfied with my performance, and lamented the ſcantineſs of my ſhare—but encouraged me to perſevere, and reconcile my preſent unequal recompence to the vulgar vitiation of taſte in the country, and the whimſical caprices which occaſionally governed people of every deſcription, in regard to their amuſements. —He meant in about three weeks to remove to another town, where there was a greater probability of ſucceeding—they had already, he obſerved, been too long at Tewkſbury.——

The next thing to be conſidered was a character for my *ſecond* appearance.—I hinted a preference for "Othello"—but he very civilly oppoſed this as a play

excluded from his preſent ſtock—if I were inclined to venture on genteel comedy, he would get up "The Provoked Huſband," and I ſhould have the character of "Lord Townly"—this I readily conſented to, and before we parted, it was agreed, "that the young gentleman "who had been ſo *well* received in Oro-"nooko, would, on the Friday follow-"ing, preſent Lord Townly."——

The company exhibited only three times a week, and as my firſt performance was on Monday, one night's entertainment intervened between my firſt and ſecond appearance—on that night I had leave of abſence, but as they performed "The Fair Penitent," my curioſity was excited to witneſs the diſplay of the company's abilities in tragedy—but as my report muſt neceſſarily be very unfavour-

unfavourable, I hold it charitable to be ſilent.——

I was not diſagreeably ſurprized to find, that conſidering me as one of the company, I was entitled to *my* diviſion, on the profits of the night, in common with the reſt—my ſhare, however, was leſs by one-fourth than before.

I don't know how far I am warrantable in diſcovering any part of the ſecret hiſtory of a ſtrolling company's green room, now that I am of neceſſity intereſted in the concealment, nor ſhould I, to any one elſe, be ſo prodigal in my communications, but it is hardly likely that my letters ſhould ever come under the inſpection of ſtrangers, and in running over this haſty ſketch of their manners and cuſtoms, I am on the one hand furniſhing you with a little amuſement,

and on the other gratifying myſelf.—
—You can never pretend to forget the conditions I opened our correſpondence with—and if, on any occaſion, my confidence ſhould be abuſed, I have done with you for ever.

Regardleſs of any thing like the imitation of ſuperior eſtabliſhments of the drama, we have here no private apartments appropriated to the accommodation of individuals—and whatever changes are requiſite in the courſe of our evening duty, muſt be unceremoniouſly effected in the preſence of the whole community—ſeated, or rather huddled on a crazy form, in a corner of the tottering fabric, you may ſee our chief tragedy queen, warily *coaxing* an unruly ſtocking, that has rebelliouſly ſhrunk from its faithleſs ſhoe, —whilſt another of inferior conſequence, is *unfrizzing* her matted locks with horrible

rible grimaces, and incommoding a crofs-grained heroine, who in ſulky ſilence is devouring an envied portion of bread and cheeſe, which ſhe had providentially furniſhed herſelf with, to guard againſt the contingencies of appetite—nor be the *chef d'œuvre* of our heroes unnoticed—indebted to a ſpotleſs ſheet of paper for the temporary ruffles which decorate their roſy wriſts, and in ſhape of frills or chitterlings ſtart out from their ſcanty waiſtcoats, ſee them boaſt of their reſpective talents, each conſciouſly—emulative of the other, and exulting whilſt he hints at the unbounded applauſe he had juſt before received from a diſcerning audience—the gay Lothario perhaps has realized an uſeleſs penny, which he hawks about in his hand, to tempt with flattering challenge a needy brother

to try his luck upon, and according to the event of head or tail, either add to *his* ſtock, or entirely annihilate it—in the former caſe, he is enabled to realize a ſolitary pint of ale for himſelf, but if unſucceſsful, the ſame privilege is enjoyed by his antagoniſt—nor are the little jealouſies and ſly ſpurts of envy which occaſionally pervade this motley aſſembly, unworthy of obſervation.—Favors, when conferred here, are ſeldom forgotten, and this evening I heard "Horatio ſeverely "reproach Roſſano with ingratitude, for "refuſing him a ſcimitar for the fighting ſcene, when the evening before he "had accommodated *him* with a wig for "the farce"—a variety of ſuch contentions prevail in this republic—I call it a republic, for the manager, who undoubtedly ought to eſtabliſh regulations, and

enforce

enforce obedience to them, is himſelf as liable to error, and to fall into thoſe infirmities, as the reſt.——

Amongſt the female part of this curious groupe, there is a ſprightly young girl, who bears the *name* of a man ſhe cohabits with, in the company, that report has not been very delicate in propagating doubts of the reality of her claim to—this evening ſhe paid me a good deal of attention—and, her huſband being ſtationed at the door for the night, I had an opportunity of whiſpering ſome civil things to her—I had often heard that reſtraint is not apt to prevail in country companies of this deſcription, and the fair one's advances were ſo familiar, that I could not poſſibly reſiſt attempting a ſlight preſſure on her hand—finding this pretty favorably received,

as

as well as acknowledged, I ventured a more expreſſive overture—this was ſo cordially reliſhed, that I made no ceremony of approaching her lips, and giving her a warm earneſt of the paſſion ſhe inſpired.

I had now the world before me.—I might, to be ſure, in this new way of life, but barely ſupply myſelf with common neceſſaries, but then I ſhould from time to time indulge my favorite paſſion for enterprize and adventure, and the novelty of the ſcenes I muſt neceſſarily be engaged in, would always furniſh amuſement of ſome kind or other—in ſhort, I made up my mind, to continue at any rate for a ſeaſon in the company, and to endeavour to proportion my expences to my income—it muſt be obſerved, that

I had the choice of a benefit in all the towns we peregrinated thro'.——

Whether my fair friend (whom I ſhall call Lucilla) had any ſhare in effecting this determination, I leave you to judge—certain it is, ſhe was continually uppermoſt in my thoughts, and I reſolved, let what would be the conſequence, to cultivate the connexion.——

The next morning, a young woman brought me a letter, whilſt I was at breakfaſt—the girl delivered it—and retired.——

I opened it and read as follows:

" If Mr. Manley thinks it worth while " to take a walk by the ſide of the ri- " ver, on the road leading to * * * * * " between four and five this afternoon, " he may find a perſon there that may " convince

" convince him his pains will not be al-
" together unrequited."——

" Thurſday morn."——

I readily gueſſed to whom I was indebted for the honor of this billet, and it was not very likely I ſhould neglect ſo flattering an aſſignation.——

At the hour appointed, I directed my ſteps towards the happy river, whoſe vernant banks my fair correſpondent had fixed on for the ſcene of our tender rencounter.——

True to the purport of her gracious billet, I found the impatient fair one already there, and had the happineſs to find myſelf received with the moſt engaging welcome.—This ſpot, ſhe told me, was choſen by her as the likelieſt to eſcape impertinent obſervation from the curious

curious towns-people, and here ſhe ſaid ſhe had invited me to come for the purpoſe of making an explanation which was particularly intereſting to her.

I will endeavour to recollect her narrative, in nearly the words ſhe delivered it.——

" My real name is Harvey—I am the
" daughter of a poor curate in Corn-
" wall—my brother and I were all the
" family he had—at a very early age, I
" can juſt remember my brother's en-
" liſting into a regiment that ſoon after
" went abroad—my mother died when I
" was an infant, and the care of my edu-
" cation, of courſe, devolved chiefly on my
" father, who took a good deal of pains
" with me, inſomuch that I was reckoned
" ſuperior to moſt girls of my age, in
" point of underſtanding.—My younger

" years

" years paſſed away happy enough, and
" I knew neither ſorrow or care until
" the age of ſixteen, when my poor fa-
" ther died—and I was left an orphan,
" friendleſs and unprovided for.—

" My father's ſucceſſor in the humble
" curacy was a good kind of man, who
" very readily ſuffered me to remain in
" the houſe until I could adopt ſome
" plan for my future eſtabliſhment in
" life—and as I became poſſeſſed of all
" my father's ſcanty effects, I converted
" them into money, and found myſelf
" miſtreſs of about fourteen pounds.

" Thro' the benevolent exertions of
" Mr. Pryce, the new curate, I obtain-
" ed a letter from a lady to a relation of
" her's at Briſtol, who wanted a com-
" panion, (a ſituation I was tolerably
" well qualified for)—and with an aching

" heart,

" heart, I took a laſt farewell of the
" dear abode of my innocence and
" youth.—

" On my arrival at Briſtol, I readily
" found the houſe I was recommended
" to, but the lady had the preceding
" morning taken a ſudden journey to
" London, and the hopes I had fondly
" cheriſhed, in an inſtant vaniſhed.

" I wrote to Mr. Pryce, intreating his
" advice how to act—and one morning
" attended at the poſt-office, expecting
" an anſwer to my letter, but finding
" none, and fearing my only friend had
" forgot me, I turned aſide, and burſt
" into tears—at this moment a genteel
" looking man came up to me, and very
" humanely enquired into the cauſe of
" my diſtreſs—artleſs and innocent I
" told my ſtory—it ſeemed to affect him,

" and he promiſed to be a friend to me
" —taking out a pencil, he wrote his
" addreſs on a bit of paper, and deſired
" me to call on him in the morning.

" This perſon turned out to be the
" manager of a reſpectable country com-
" pany of players, that travelled thro'
" the weſt of England—he compliment-
" ed me very civilly on my figure and
" appearance, and invited me to try my
" fortune on the ſtage—nor was much
" ſolicitation neceſſary—I had read
" Shakeſpear's works, and acquired ſome
" ſlight knowledge of the drama from
" other books that had been furniſhed
" me by ſome neighbours at home—in
" ſhort, Mr. Manley, I cloſed with the
" manager's offer, and in about a week
" he took me with him to ——— where
" I made my firſt appearance in *Maria*

" in

" in the woeful tragedy of *George Barn-*
" *well.*——

" Time, however, brought ſome la-
" tent qualities of mine forwards, and
" comedy proved to be my forte—when
" the diffidence of youth and modeſty
" began to ſubſide, I ſhewed ſome ſymp-
" toms of ſprightlineſs and humour,
" which induced the manager to alter
" my caſt, and in future I had the choice
" of the beſt characters in that line, and
" was abſolutely a favorite with the au-
" diences in general.——

" It is not poſſible for me to explain
" to you the precarioufneſs of a ſituation
" like mine, expoſed to ſuch repeated
" advances of love and gallantry from
" every quarter—you may judge of it,
" but it will be imperfectly.—I have not
" a diſagreeable perſon, Mr. Manley,

" tho' I pretend to no claim to beauty,
" but I was young, my face was new,
" and I had the character of being
" diſcreet and virtuous—this expoſed
" me to the artillery of innumerable ad-
" mirers, whoſe attacks it would have
" been almoſt impoſſible to reſiſt.——

" But—at this juncture our manager's
" wife was detected in a faux-pas with
" an attorney from London, who came
" to the aſſizes at ———, and not chu-
" ſing to undergo too formal an inveſti-
" gation into her conduct, ſhe prudently
" made up her mind at once, and eloped
" with her paramour.

" This vacancy in our governor's do-
" meſtic eſtabliſhment was offered to
" me—and my vanity was flattered in the
" proſpect of ſupplying ſo reſpectable
" a place, and taking the manager's

" name

" name—in ſhort, neceſſity overpowered
" my virtue, and I ſurrendered.——

" With Mr. ——— I lived two years
" happily enough—the little prejudices
" of education by degrees wore away—
" and I forgot that by making myſelf
" temporarily comfortable, I was laying
" a foundation for permanent inquie-
" tude.——

" And now my fortunes began to wa-
" ver—the return of the manager's wife,
" at this criſis, cloſed my guilty inter-
" courſe with her huſband.—Matters, I
" found, had been accommodated thro'
" the influence of a gentleman who had
" conſiderable connexions in one of our
" beſt towns, and the manager was one
" of thoſe good-natured complying cha-
" racters, that make little difficulty in
" yielding where his *intereſt directed*.—

" In a very little time after their re-
" conciliation, the manager retired from
" public buſineſs, and the company diſ-
" perſed.——

" The preſent Mr. —— whoſe name
" I bear, had made me ſome flattering
" advances, and being what is called a
" pains-taking man, and tolerably uſeful
" in his buſineſs, I thought it moſt ad-
" viſable to accept of his protection,
" and from that time, to the preſent, we
" have lived together.

" But he is not the man to my mind,
" and I have determined to leave him—
" now, Mr. Manley, I have ingenuouſly
" related my ſtory, and you may believe,
" that guilt is not entirely familiar to
" me, when I tell you, that dire neceſſity
" has heretofore urged me to embrace
" a way of life very repugnant to thoſe

" principles which were carefully incul-
" cated to my infant mind—believe
" me, Sir, promiſcuous gallantry is not
" my purſuit, and were I under the pro-
" tection of a man whom I could eſ-
" teem, I think my future conduct would
" convince the world that I am capable
" of acquitting myſelf with honor and
" fidelity.—

" In the town of —— in Dorſetſhire
" I have a female friend, who has pow-
" erful influence in a very reſpectable
" company to which ſhe belongs—I am
" certain of an advantageous engage-
" ment, go when I will—Tewkſbury
" will do *you* no good—come with me,
" and we will ſhare our fortunes toge-
" ther."——

Here our frank heroine cloſed her narrative—and the candor with which ſhe

ſhe expreſſed herſelf prepoſſeſſed me a good deal in her favor.—I could not immediately reconcile to myſelf the idea of being ungrateful to the Tewkſbury manager, but as I ſaw no likelihood of getting forward in my preſent humble ſtation (and I have really ſome opinion of my abilities), I ſoon cloſed with Lucilla's propoſal.

I have now performed five nights, for which I have realized the ſum of five ſhillings and ten-pence—excluſive of three nights profit from the exertions of my fellow-labourers—the manager quits this town next week, and I ſhall then take leave of him—You may ſuppoſe that I have not coldly paſſed over the favorable opportunities Lucilla's condeſcenſion furniſhed me with, and I ſee no reaſon why I ſhould conceal from you,

that

that my name ſtands conſpicuous in the frail fair one's liſt of gallantry.

I have now brought my ſtory down to the preſent moment—when any thing occurs worth communicating, I ſhall renew my correſpondence—if you find it convenient to write in the courſe of eight days, you may direct to the poſt-office at Tewkſbury.

Adieu—Nugent—I confide in your ſecrecy, and as you merit my friendſhip and good offices, you will continue to find me

yours——

JOHN DOUGLAS.

P. S. Forget not I am now Mr. Manley.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

To Miss Augusta Conway.

Saturday.

WHY does my beloved friend ſuffer herſelf to be agitated by a dread of events that poſſibly have no exiſtence but in the imagination, or are probably the miſchievous fabrications of idle report? I will anſwer for St. Aubyn—I will go further—ſuch is my veneration for the character of this worthy man, that "I will pledge *my life* for his in-" tegrity."—Ah! my dear, that "fatal "paſſion ſtill clings to his heart" with arbitrary influence, and were he to vow eternal

eternal love to a thouſand beauties, " he " would never *feel* it but for *one.*"——

Recollect, Auguſta, for what a length of time you held his " affections cap- " tive," and at a time of life too when the " heart is apt to waver"—but St. Aubyn was " firm, and grew only more " attached to you, the more you wounded " his truth with cruelty and diſdain."—

I acquit him, my dear, of any thing like " looſe deſign, or voluntary guilt"— " hear me, hear your Louiſa, as *your* " affectionate friend, and *his* earneſt ad- " vocate—love him, Auguſta, and re- " ward a fidelity that does honor to his " ſex—afford *me* the inexpreſſible delight " of hearing, that my amiable friend is " returned, like a little prodigal, to the " heart, from which ſhe had wandered, " and is happily ſheltered in St. Aubyn's

" generous

" generous affection"—let your next tell me ſo, my dear, and every anxiety which friendſhip neceſſarily feels for the welfare of a beloved object will be huſhed.

Adieu—for I need not add that

I am faithfully yours,

LOUISA WENTWORTH.

LET-

LETTER XXIV.

To Sydney St. Aubyn, Esq.

Brook-Dale.

Honored Sir,

I AM more thankful than I can expreſs, for your generous preſent; but the pleaſure I feel in finding you think me deſerving your kind favors, is far greater than any comfort I can immediately derive from its value—if I have no opportunity of ſhewing my gratitude to you, Sir, for your ever-to-be-remembered bounty, I ſhall do my humble en-

deavours to acknowledge it by attention to my dear little charge, and indeed, Sir, could you ſee him, you would be ſatisfied that I am not unmindful of my duty.

I am ſorry to tell you that worthy Mrs. Villars takes on very much about her dear niece, who, we hear, is very dangerouſly ill, but we don't know where—the houſe that uſed to be the ſeat of hoſpitality and joy, is now in a manner ſhut up, and none but the moſt intimate friends are admitted.

We are all in the dark about what broke off the match ſo ſuddenly—ſome ſay Miſs, herſelf, declined it, but it has been whiſpered that the Colonel, who was a great gambler, had ſadly impaired his fortune by playing with great folks in London, and was worth next to no-

thing—ſo that Miſs Conway's fortune was to have patched up his—and moreover it has been ſaid, that he was arreſted by bailiffs, and taken away to priſon—but for my part, I heed not common report, which is ſo apt to impoſe upon and miſlead us—was I to ſpeak what I think, I muſt ſay I am not ſorry that things are as they are, ſeeing it opens a poſſibility for two certain perſons, whom I dearly honor, to come together after all.——

Ah, Sir, forgive my familiar way of addreſſing you—I am ſure I mean no harm, but if I could only live to ſee you and Miſs Conway happy together, I don't think I ſhould have another wiſh left in this world—my days can be but few, but that would ſhed over them a little ſun-ſhine, which would make ſome

amends for the early winter that ſets in upon my life.——

To ſo generous and open a diſpoſition as yours, it becomes every one to deal with frankneſs and ſincerity, and I cannot help telling you that I am burthened with a ſecret which I long to unfold—'tis not, to be ſure, of any great importance at preſent, and I have promiſed not to divulge it for ſome time to come. —I ſhall never commit it to writing, but ſhould you, worthy Sir, ever come again into this part of the world, I know you will not be above viſiting my humble dwelling, and I will then communicate it, and produce certain credentials, which, 'till I ſee you, ſhall ſleep—this is a ſtrange world, and ſtrange things happen every day—I am getting in years apace—thank God, my health is good,

and

and I have no complaint that threatens to injure it—but I can never die, until I have opened all I know.

Farewell, honored Sir, may every bleſſing await you, prays your dutiful and obliged ſervant,

GRACE CLEMENTS.

LETTER XXV.

To Stafford Sullivan, Esq.

Matlock.—

MY laſt broke off juſt when the Colonel and I were on the point of meeting.

There was a good deal of ſettled ceremony in his manner of receiving me—yet he is ſo perfectly well-bred, and is withal ſo extremely good-natured, that I ſaw the reſtraint he put on, was particularly irkſome.——

" To Mr. St. Aubyn," ſaid he, " I was proud of an opportunity of offering my

my friendſhip, ſince it promiſed me a return more than equivalent—it promiſed me the friendſhip of a man that I longed to eſteem, and I will freely own that it appeared to me an acquiſition that could not be too earneſtly courted.

" Chance, to be ſure, brought us together—yet I felt, from the firſt, a ſecret ſomething, an indeſcribable ſympathy that linked the young bond of friendſhip between us, and eſtabliſhed, as I thought, a pledge of its ſincerity.——

" My ſiſter, Mr. St. Aubyn, came here, and, in a very early ſtage of your acquaintance, you did her the honor to expreſs yourſelf attached to her.——

" I was prepared, and I cautioned my ſiſter againſt the common attacks of gallantry—they are what every pretty woman muſt learn to be indifferent to—and

perhaps

perhaps my ſiſter would have profited by this leſſon, had any other perſon but Mr. St. Aubyn (the friend of her brother) attempted the plunder of her affections.——

" Recollect, Sir, what paſſed between us, immediately after I had introduced you to her.—

" Your ſentiments charmed me, and I am ſorry to have occaſion to ſay, there was a deluſion in that charm, which, when I diſcovered, preſented Mr. St. Aubyn in the light of an ungenerous trifler—a man capable of abuſing the ſacred confidence of friendſhip.—

" My ſiſter, you muſt have conſidered a fit object for the idle ſpeculations of gallantry, or you would never have deliberately cheated her into a partiality for you.

" That

" That you have ſucceeded, Mr. St. Aubyn, is but too true—artleſs and unpractiſed in deceit, ſhe confeſſed the aſcendancy your apparent merits had eſtabliſhed in her heart—you marked the progreſs of your deſign, and what at firſt was an inſult, afterwards received the aggravation of cruelty.

" It is ſaid, Sir, and upon tolerable good authority, that you were long ſince contracted to a young lady of conſiderable beauty and fortune—and moreover, that the lady is at this moment at Matlock—and in the habits of being viſited by you conſtantly.——

" Now, Sir, put yourſelf for a moment in my ſituation as a brother and a man—is it only to leſſen my ſiſter's conſequence by an inglorious triumph over her credulity, that you perſevere in carrying

rying on this deluſion?—or is it to expoſe her to the mortifying ridicule of her own ſex?

And in either caſe, is it worthy a man of honor?—is it worthy the man that the brother of Emily Alderton wiſhed to call his friend?

"My ſiſter, by accident I believe, heard of the lady's being at Matlock—but not before ſhe had obſerved a change in your behaviour, a cold neglect which ſhe was not conſcious of deſerving.——

"She challenged you on the occaſion, and I underſtand you had recourſe to an evaſion to excuſe yourſelf.——

"Urged by no ſanguinary views, Mr. St. Aubyn, but anxiouſly wiſhing that your explanation may be worthy of yourſelf, (and upon my ſoul, I am ſo prepoſſeſſed in your favor, that I think you incapable

incapable of a wiſh to ſhrink from the enquiry,) I have ſolicited this interview—there may poſſibly be an error ſomewhere—or a miſunderſtanding."—

I interrupted him—

" It ſeems, Colonel Alderton, we meet as friends, and I cannot heſitate a moment to yield to the ſolicitation of friendſhip, what I might, under other circumſtances, have withheld.——

" Let me preface my anſwer to your charge, by declaring, that I love your ſiſter—and that nothing on earth was equal to the pleaſure I felt in finding myſelf not indifferent to her.—

" Every ſentence I uttered, received the private ſanction of my *heart*—and I would have torn it from my breaſt ſooner than it ſhould have harbored a wiſh to deceive her.—

" It

" It is undoubtedly true, that there is a lady at Matlock to whom I *was* contracted—and it is alſo a fact, that I have viſited her *here* ONCE ſince her arrival.

" She came, Sir, an invalid to this place—perfectly unacquainted with my being here—and I equally a ſtranger to her viſit.—

" Of courſe, we could not now have been in *any* habits of intimacy together.

" I own, I once nouriſhed an unfortunate paſſion for this lady—ſhe flattered me into a belief that I had intereſted her affections, and for three long years I cheriſhed the dear deluſion—but I was at laſt fatally deceived—I ſay fatally deceived, for my health ſuffered—and I had ſcarce recovered it, when Colonel Alderton met with me at Matlock.—

" A thouſand

" A thouſand circumſtances rendered it almoſt impoſſible that I ſhould ever ſee the lady again—about a month ſince I was informed, that ſhe was on the point of a marriage, which has ſince been ſuddenly broken off—and ſome letters which I have in my poſſeſſion, will ſatisfy you, that I had reaſon to ſuppoſe her far diſtant from hence.

" Her ſervant met my man Williams at the library, and they greedily ſwallowed each other's intelligence—the conſequence was, that the lady ſent me a card, requeſting to ſee me the next morning.——

" I went, and ſo wholly was ſhe unacquainted with my attachment to your ſiſter, that ſhe abſolutely regretted I had not yet ſurrendered my affections, and

cultivated ſome intercourſe that would be more fortunate than my laſt.——

" But, as a perfect preluſion to every thing like the flattery of hope, ſhe declared herſelf bound, by a ſolemn vow of celibacy, which no conſideration ſhould induce her to break—moreover, it was very unlikely, under the peculiar circumſtances of her ſituation, that ſhe ſhould ever think of me otherwiſe than as a friend—and ſhe offered me *her* friendſhip, becauſe ſhe would not be *diſturbed* again with my love.—

" How this could poſſibly give birth to ſuſpicions injurious to my honor, I am at a loſs to conceive.——

" When I anſwered the firſt and only charge Miſs Alderton ever made againſt me, I was guilty of no evaſion whatever. —I told her that a domeſtic incident had diſconcerted

diſconcerted me—this was certainly the caſe, and I longed for an opportunity to bring about an explanation which I felt was due to her—for this purpoſe, I ſolicited Miſs Alderton yeſterday to walk with me—ſhe had heretofore, condeſcended to truſt herſelf under my protection, —and I ſtill hoped, I had not forfeited my claim to her confidence—I prepared myſelf with ſome papers to illuſtrate the ſubject—and indeed I wiſh I had been honored with an interview, ſince it would not only have ſpared you the unpleaſant impreſſion which has been upon your mind—but it would have ſaved me the pang of finding myſelf ſuſpected ——— of what I am the laſt man on earth capable of?"——

—" This explanation, Mr. St. Aubyn, is already ſatisfactory, and does you

infinite honor—I know the world, Sir, and have taken ſome pains to ſtudy the human heart—I have examined yours, and I make more allowance for what has paſſed, than you ſuppoſe I can, from what you have ſuggeſted on the ſubject.—You tell me you have had one interview with the lady, and I dare ſay, the remembrance of that attachment which you pronounce *fatal*, was then a ſource of embarraſſment and diſtreſs to you—when the heart has once fondly *cheriſhed a* PASSION full well I know (becauſe I have felt) the difficulty of weaning it from its firſt affections—I hope, however, you have too much manly fortitude, to ſuffer yourſelf to have a moment's uneaſineſs about what paſſed between my ſiſter and you, previous to this lady's appearance at Matlock, and

before

before you had any idea of the poſſibility of returning to your former flame—if you *do* regret it, my ſiſter muſt ſubmit, and be reconciled ſhe is certainly worthy an undivided heart, Mr. St. Aubyn, and whomever ſhe beſtows her love upon, muſt have no other impreſſion hanging about it—nor will you, Sir, think me rude, if I take the freedom to aſk you, if you had not made a declaration to my ſiſter, (which you feel yourſelf bound in honor to abide by) you would have tried to remove the difficulties that ſtood between you and the lady, with a confidence that you could ſtill be happier with her?"——

—"I certainly once thought my exiſtence depended on the ſucceſs of my firſt attachment—and I own, I was lately weak enough to contemplate it, with ſome-

thing like returning fondneſs—but reaſon ſoon awakened me from the dangerous delirium—my heart *muſt* learn to preſerve its dignity—*it* SHALL *learn to be worthy of Emily Alderton.*"——

—" For either of us to ſay more is needleſs—there is my hand, St Aubyn—and when the moment arrives that gives me the title of *Brother*, you will find it doubly endearing by the diſtinction of *Friend.*—

" My ſiſter ſhall be apprized of what has paſſed between us—you will give us your company at breakfaſt in the morning."——

—Here we parted, and love, ever miſchievouſly diſpoſed, no ſooner flattered me with the pleaſing proſpect that preſented Emily Alderton leading me to happineſs than—reverſing the ſcene, it ſhewed

ſhewed me a fatal barrier intercepting every view of the ſtill-remembered charms of Auguſta Conway.

When alone, I turned again to the magical paper, the contents of which were often floating in my mind—I read——

"THY MOMENT FOR TRIUMPH'S AT HAND."

This prediction appeared to be verifying, for I ſhould now very ſoon lead Miſs Alderton to the altar, whilſt Miſs Conway (if ſhe had any reaſon to believe me ſincere in my late declaration to her) would certainly feel ſome mortification in ſuppoſing, that I had in *my own opinion*, choſe my day to retaliate.

This ſort of triumph is not altogether manly, nor ſhould I feel comfortable in being ſuſpected of it—women are allowed little

little whimſical particularities in matters of gallantry—they have enough to do to guard againſt the deceptions with which deſigning men gloſs over their advances, and acting upon the defenſive, they have a right to practice manœuvres—but for men deliberately and wantonly to deceive, (let the motive be what it will,) is I think highly unwarrantable.—Auguſta Conway has, I own, embittered my youth, and, with cruel dexterity, taught me, early, the leſſons of misfortune—but I can never forget the woman that was dear to me—and whilſt I am weak enough to remember it, I can never be reconciled to the idea of exulting in her diſappointments.——

I wiſh, Stafford, I had never come to Matlock—I know that I muſt fly the place, and abandon every ſpot where the

the dreaded preſence of Auguſta threatens to diſturb me—never—ah never more *muſt* I ſee her.———

My interview with Miſs Alderton the next morning furniſhed a ſcene more delicious than I have power to paint—ſhe was every thing St. Aubyn's fondneſs could wiſh, and as the little lurking jealouſies which love inſidiouſly countenances, began to diſappear, ſhe ſuffered me to kiſs away the pearly drops which ſtarted on her poliſhed cheek, and came forth the faithful heralds of her melting heart.

The Colonel, I dare ſay, had given her ſome intimation about my affair with Auguſta, for when I hinted a wiſh to leave Matlock, ſhe cloſed with it immediately, and ſaid ſhe had relations at Bath, with whom it would give her great

great pleaſure to paſs a few weeks—and it was accordingly ſettled, that early in the next week we ſhould all repair to Bath.

This is the preſent ſtate of affairs with us—It is not likely that any freſh occurrence ſhould ſtart, to become the ſubject of another letter whilſt I remain here—and at Bath I ſhall have an opportunity of reaſſuring my friend Stafford of the eſteem he is entitled to from his

SYDNEY ST. AUBYN.

CARD.

CARD.

To Sydney St. Aubyn, Esq.

MISS Conway's offer of friendſhip it ſeems, is unworthy of Mr. St. Aubyn's acceptance—otherwiſe he would not have ſuffered her to have repeated an importunity for the honor of a viſit. —Miſs Conway flatters herſelf ſhe is indebted to her own diſcernment for *perfectly underſtanding* Mr. St. Aubyn's ſituation—altho' he fancied himſelf ſo expert in his endeavours to conceal it.

Great minds, firm with conſcious rectitude, chearfully meet every inveſtigation—it is the *pretender* only, that ſhrinks from an enquiry.

Thurſday.

ANSWER.

ANSWER.

AH! leave me, Miſs Conway, nor waſte your valuable friendſhip on a wretch ſo unworthy.

I am guilty—I feel that I want fortitude on this trying occaſion, and it neceſſarily follows, that I dare not be too cloſely interrogated.

Yet, who is it that I muſt in my turn accuſe?—who is it that has ſtained my character with thoſe glaring *traits* of diſſimulation, which conſtitute theſe charges againſt me?

Even Auguſta Conway herſelf!

Whilſt ſhe writes, I read, and am loſt—whilſt my agitated pen attempts to

reply, reaſon is ſuſpended, and my diſtracted mind teems with a wild aſſociation of chimeras.

Then forgive me, too lovely Auguſta, and in pity deign to be ſatisfied with your triumph!—I throw myſelf on your mercy.——

I am doomed, I find, to court happineſs with another—and the ſlender ſecurity I have for it, is in forgetting that there ever was ſuch a form as Auguſta Conway!——

SYDNEY ST. AUBYN.

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

To Sydney St. Aubyn, Esq.

Bath, Friday.

I HAVE had a good deal of uneaſineſs upon your account, ſince I underſtood Miſs Conway was at Matlock—but your laſt has brought with it tidings that I hail with heartfelt ſatisfaction.

It was my intention to have left Bath on Sunday, but I have now determined to remain here until I have the pleaſure of receiving you, and the charming maid that to be attached to, is, I am ſure, to

be enamoured of every thing lovely and deſerving.

And, my dear Sydney, let nothing induce you to protract your journey.—Happineſs is once more within your reach—oh do not neglect to cultivate the opportunity—fly Auguſta's fatal preſence—renounce—forget her—it is not ſo much Miſs Conway that you ought to dread—it is your own infirmity—it is the weakneſs of my friend's heart, that knows not where to command fortitude equal to the danger he is expoſed to.——

Adieu,——

STAFFORD SULLIVAN.

LET-

LETTER XXVII.

To Miss Alderton,

Grafton-Street, Dublin.

Matlock.

RETURN me, Harriet, my laſt doleful letter* which abounded with complaints and ſuſpicions, or conſent to cancel it from our correſpondence—your heart, my dear, may at firſt blame, but will afterwards pity the weakneſs of

* This letter does not appear to have been included in the preſent collection.

your Emily.—We poor girls in love are ſtrangely inconſiſtent—alive to every impreſſion, our ſuſceptible boſoms too readily give way to doubts and apprehenſions, which eventually prove to be the empty chimeras of the moment.

Yet I deſerve to ſuffer, being the dupe to my own credulity—for having harbored a thought injurious to the character of St. Aubyn—ridiculous weakneſs—never let *me* talk of diſcernment again, that could not diſtinguiſh the prominent features of honor and integrity, from the unſubſtantial traces of treachery and diſſimulation.—St. Aubyn, my Harriet, is the moſt amiable, the moſt generous of men.

Do you admit, my dear, that we love by deſtiny?—Were I to ſet on foot an

enquiry

enquiry of this ſort, I own I ſhould ſupport the affirmation.—St. Aubyn and I were certainly made for each other—the firſt moment I ſaw him, my heart felt intereſted—it fluttered with untried pleaſure—when he ſpoke, I liſtened, and was charmed—and there was magic in his touch, which thrilled thro' my agitated ſenſes.——

When abſent, I languiſhed for his return—and if any thing checked the pleaſure his preſence imparted, it was the unwelcome thought of ſeparation.

At length, the amiable youth unboſomed his delicious ſecret—he declared that Emily was dear to him—dearer than his exiſtence, and he read in her conſenting bluſhes, the triumph of ſenſibility and love.——

Lurking jealouſy, the green-eyed parent

rent of diſtruſt, ſaw the happy intercourſe of two fond hearts, and with peculiar malignity ſtrove to embitter it.

But, 'tis over, Harriet, and in the courſe of a few days, Mr. St. Aubyn accompanies us to Bath, where I have promiſed, in about ſix weeks, to eſtabliſh the indiſſoluble bond—ſoon after which, St. Aubyn has kindly undertaken to confirm your Emily's happineſs, by ſuffering her to paſs a few months with her friends in Dublin.

It will be unneceſſary for me to write until after my arrival at Bath, when probably the novelty of thoſe ſcenes may furniſh a ſubject for my pen—at preſent my giddy head is too much intoxicated with luxuriant proſpects of unlooked-for happineſs, to enable me to deſcend to ſubjects leſs intereſting than love—and

you

you know how to make allowance for my little infirmities.——Adieu, therefore, beſt beloved of ſiſters, and be ſatisfied that no change can ever diminiſh the affection with which I am

Yours,

E. ALDERTON,

Frank writes himſelf by the ſame poſt.

LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

To Sydney St. Aubyn, Esq.

IF all that I have ſaid is inſufficient to reſtore you to the full poſſeſſion of your heart, and you ſtill *fear* to ſee me, conſider, St. Aubyn, what an unworthy offering you are making *her*, who believes herſelf the ſovereign miſtreſs of your affections.

I know you are about to leave Matlock, and I alſo know for what purpoſe. —Go, Sir,—I wiſh you every poſſible happineſs; *unleſs* you think you can venture to receive from me my perſonal congra-

congratulations—*then*, perhaps, you may be convinced, that Auguſta Conway is capable of being the *friend* ſhe profeſſed herſelf. you are a cunning bitch to plague the man so!

A. C.

END OF VOL. I.

congratulate—then, perhaps, you may be convinced, that Angelia Conway is capable of being [illegible] practised [illegible].

A. C.